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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

HENRY ALFORD.

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CALIF.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

HENRY ALFORD,

VICAR OF WYMESWOLD, LEICESTERSHIRE.

Munus ecce fictile
Inimus intra regiam salutis;
Attamen vel infimam
Deo obsequelam præstitisse prodest.
Quidquid illud accidet.
Juvabit ore personasse Christum.

PRUDENTIUS.

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TO

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW,

The Author of Evangeline,

THIS EDITION IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS WARM ADMIRER,

HENRY ALFORD.

Not war, nor hurrying troops from plain to plain,
Nor deed of high resolve, nor stern command,
Sing I ; the brow that carries trace of pain
Long and enough the sons of song have scanned :
Nor lady's love in honeysuckle bower,
With helmet hanging by, in stolen ease :
Poets enough I deemed of heavenly power
Ere now had lavished upon themes like these.
My harp and I have sought a holier meed ;
The fragments of God's image to restore,
The earnest longings of the soul to feed,
And balm into the spirit's wounds to pour.
One gentle voice hath bid our task God-speed :
And now we search the world to hear of more.

PREFACE.

I HAVE been requested to write a Preface for the American Edition of my collected Poems: in other words, to make a first speech, on my own behalf, to a company who have kindly shown that they knew me before I knew them.

In so doing, I will say a little of myself, but more of that common interest which has made us, at the distance of the wide Atlantic, mutually acquainted.

Some years since, none would have ventured to predict the delight with which some of us in England now read American poetry. Certainly, as far as present promise augurs, the graft will ere long be prolific of more and goodlier fruit than the parent stock. In this country, poetry is fast passing out of the field of the public view as a subject of interest. The modern school here is one of intensely artificial thought, and diction elaborately obscure; and even the highly-seasoned viands which it serves up, find but few who think them worth tasting. For the events and habits of our day, we have no recognised poetic utterance. Our poets walk on stilts too high, to admit of their seeing the fresh flowers which are springing up over the level swards of English society. We want an infusion of boldness and freedom into our poesy: a new invasion of Saxon truthful-

ness and plain-spokenness, which, at the risk of some poetical indecorums, may re-invigorate the decline, and at least postpone the fall of our republic of letters. And it is on this account, that our real lovers of song hail the freshness and vigor of your recent American bards, and look to them or their followers for the rise of a genuine new school of English poesy. We want metres and diction which, not having been wedded by the association of ages to classic proprieties, shall not be afraid to sing of railways, and steamers and telegraphs, and to recognise the vast changes which Providence is making among men; and these things you are beginning to give us.

Art is as wide as Man: every world-reality, may be also made a reality in art: if it is not so made, the poverty is in the artists. Artists come to perfection through trials and failures: many a mirror is broken, before the perfect reflector comes forth which gives us, glorified and cleared, the bright distant luminary of truth. You may have many poets before you have a great poet: but if they be real ones, their power will wax onward, and culminate at last. In the analogies of His works, who made both the heaven above us and the heaven of thought, the rising of many stars gives at least hope of the rising of a sun.

The Poems here printed are scattered, and for the most part crude fragments of song, dating many years since. The longest among them would, in my present view, much better have formed a series of smaller pieces, than have been joined, as now, by imperfect and easily-distinguished cement into the semblance of what it is not, a continuous poem on one subject. But a writer of twenty years' standing has no

right to alter and re-cast works to his present liking, which, whether good or bad, have long ago become the property of the public.

The few recent pieces, are records, as their name and contents imply, of severe domestic sorrow.

I have of late been prevented from writing poetry, not so much by affliction (which, whatever the world may say, is rather suggestive of true poetic thought, than repressive), as by laborious mental employment on a biblical work, which will demand the best years of my life. But I yet look forward, if spared, to a tranquil evening, during which the 'promise of more' may be fulfilled.

LONDON, JUNE 10, 1852.

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POEMS.

THE ABBOT OF MUCHELNAYE.[1]

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

With pale ray — for she hath no fellow yet —
The eve-star shineth out above the west;
The sheep-bell tinkles, and the fold is set;
The swinkt[2] kine, one by one, are laid to rest;
The rooks have ceased from chattering in their nest;
And shepherds whistle homeward through the grey
And misty flats, where from the elm-wood's breast
Forth rise, empurpled with the parting day,
The dim embattled tops of solemn Muchelnaye.

[1] Muchelney — 'the great island' — is a village in the moors of Somersetshire, two miles south-west of Langport. There are the remains of a Benedictine abbey, founded by King Athelstan. The buildings are of the later Gothic, or *perpendicular* style.

[2] Wearied.

II.

Before the rosy streak had vanished
From the last cloud that look'd upon the sun,
In yonder abbey-pile the mass was said,
The psalm was chanted, and the vespers done:
The holy men are singly pent each one
In chamber climbed by solitary stair;
And he who labor'd in far fields alone
Late passing, hears upon the twilight air
Tu, Jesu, salva me — their deep and secret prayer.

III.

The abbot sitteth in his chamber lone,
But now he laid his sacred vestment by,
And leaned his crosier on the fretted stone;
He prayeth not, but out into the sky
He looketh forth with wild and dreamful eye,
Under the quatre-foils of many hues
Carved in the clustered mullions broad and high;
Full sorrowfully seems his heart to muse,
And fetches other sighs than holy abbots use.

VI.

Belike he hath called up his youthful days,
Before he gave his soul to wait on Heaven,
When his steps wandered into downward ways;
And he has thought of sins to be forgiven,
Like thunder-strokes athwart his conscience riven;
But all the fond admissions of his youth
Long since by prayer and penance have been shriven;
And he hath offered up, in shame and sooth,
His sad and peccant soul at the bright shrine of Truth.

V.

But he hath much to do with earthly sighs;
There is a vision of pure loveliness,
Link'd to a thousand painful memories
That scar his inner soul with deep distress;
He kneeleth to his prayer, but not the less
That rising sorrow will not be represt:
He prayeth, but his lot he may not bless;
He drops his arms, erewhile that crossed his breast,
And counsels how his sad heart he may lighten best.

VI.

Yet time has been when he was bold and gay,
A boy of open brow and lordly mien;
Him on his proud steed, at the rise of day,
First in the field his father's hills have seen,
To rouse the forest deer; and time has been
When he hath whispered words in lady's bower,
And wandered not alone in sward-paths green,
What time he wooed and won, in luckless hour,
The high-born Lady Agnes of St. Dunstan's tower.

VII.

One life-consuming thought his peace destroys;
Before his memory pass in wild array,
As they have passed full often, all the joys
That rose and set upon his bridal day;
Oh, might he see that priest, who could betray
The secret trusted to his troth to keep,
And could that morn the solemn service say
With inward plot of treachery dark and deep;—
But let him rest — for vengeance will not alway sleep.

VIII.

That form of saintly beauty, robed in white,
With yielded hand; his heart in bliss intense
High-throbbing with the triumph of delight;
Those downward eyes of maiden innocence;
That first sweet look of wedded confidence; —
And then the armèd grasp, the short reply, —
The dizzy swoon that fetter'd all his sense; —
The waking underneath the portal high,
In the faint glimmering light, with pale monks standing by.

IX.

He hath had power; but, all athirst for love,
He passed it by, and tasted not: the earth
Each summer-tide, in meadow and in grove,
Teemed with the riches of her yearly birth; —
High music and the sounds of holy mirth,
Evening and morning, fell upon his ear; —
But all this, heard or seen, was nothing worth,
So there were wanting one sweet voice to cheer;
Were this his Eden-ground, he finds no helpmate here.

X.

His not 'the sickening pang of hope deferred,'
Nor calm dismission of a treasure lost;
But anguish deep, unwritten and unheard,
Of the full heart amidst fulfilment crost;
When most assured, then downward smitten most.
Yet did the lamp of love burn upward bright;
Yet did the flame, though by fierce tempest tost,

With ever-constant and consoling light
In solitude pierce through his spirit's darkest night.

XI.

His waking thoughts with sorrow trafficked most:
But when the gentle reign of sleep began,
Then through a varied and uncounted host
Of pleasant memories his free fancy ran;
Sometimes the heavenly harps their strain began,
Responsive quiring to each angel-hand;
And brightest throned amidst the high divan,
Sweetest in voice of all the sainted band,
Was she — his wedded spouse — the glory of that land.

XII.

Sometimes through twilight fields or summer grove
They went in converse; and the wondrous power
Of world-creation viewed by light of love;
Sometimes he saw her with a blessed dower
Of fairest children, and each little flower
Grow into beauty, and its station keep
Around their common life; — thus the night-hour
Would pass dream-hallowed, and then faithless sleep
Steal from his widowed couch, and he would wake and weep.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

It is the solemn midnight; and the moon
Hard by the zenith holds her solemn state,

And yon flushed star will westward dip full soon
Behind the elms that gird the abbey-gate; —
There stair and hall are drear and desolate;
And even Devotion doth her votaries spare,
Save the appointed ones on Heaven that wait,
Wafting upon the hushed unlistening air
Tu, Jesu, salva nos — their deep and night-long prayer.

II.

In low flat lines the slumbering dew-mist broods
Along the reaches of the Parret-stream;[1]
And on the far-off vales and clustered woods
Dwells, like the hazy daylight of a dream;
Piled over which, the dusky mountains seem
As a new continent, whose headlands steep
Within his day's fair voyage now doth deem
Some mariner, whose laden vessels creep
Across the dim white level of the severing deep.

III.

In the mid prospect, from its shadowy screen
Rises the abbey-pile; each pinnacle
Distinct with purest light; save where, dark green,
The ivy-clusters round some buttress dwell,
The sharp and slender tracery varying well;
Perfect the group, and to poetic gaze
Like a fair palace, by the potent spell
Of old magician summoned from the haze,
Some errant faery knight to wilder with amaze.

[1] The river Parret, which, rising in the Dorsetshire hills, flows across the moors of Somersetshire, and empties itself into the Bristol Channel, below Bridgewater.

IV.

But list! the pendant on the wicket-latch
Hath rung its iron summons; and the sight
Through the uncertain shadowings may catch
A muffled figure, as of some lone wight
Belated in the flats this summer night,
And seeking refuge in the abbey near:
Again those strokes the slumbering band affright,
And cause the wakeful choir, in doubt and fear,
To pause amid their chant, and breathless bend to hear.

V.

Slow moves the porter, heavy with the load
Of age and sleep; some newly happened ill —
Some way-side murder — doth his heart forebode;
And at the wicket come, he pauseth still,
And on his brow the icy drops distil;
Till a faint voice admission doth implore —
'Open, blest fathers, — the night-damps are chill;
So may your abbot's holy aid restore
One whose life falters now at death's uncertain door.'

VI.

The smaller wicket first he inward turns
For caution and assurance; then as slow
By the dim taper-light that flickering burns,
Scans well the stranger, whether friend or foe;
Then stooping draws the massy bolt below,
Well satisfied that such a form as stands
Before him now no treachery can know,
Can bear no weapon in those trembling hands,
Nor be the wily scout of nightly prowling bands.

VII.

A holy woman is it, who desires
Speech with the abbot's reverence: 'For fear
Of God in heaven, who each one's life requires
At each one's brother's hand, call thou him here,
Or point me where he rests, that I may clear
My soul of that wherewith I am in trust;
For she who sent me to her end is near:
And who shall make amendment, or be just,
When the pale eye hath mingled with its kindred dust?'

VIII.

'Sister,—for by thy russet garb I guess
Thou art of yonder saintly company
Whose frequent hymns our holy Mother bless,
Borne hither from St. Mary's Priory,[1]—
Hard is it for one chilled with age like me
To do thine urgent bidding; close behind
The landing of yon steep stair dwelleth he
Of whom thou speakest; sleep doth seldom bind
His eyelids; wakeful unto prayer thou shalt him find.'

IX.

Up the strait stair the long-robed figure glides,
The while the aged man his taper's light
Trims, and with friendly voice the stranger guides,
Till the dark buttress hides her from his sight;
And then he peers abroad into the night,
Crossing himself for fear of aught unblest;
For sprites and fairies, when the moon is bright,

[1] Its ruins yet remain, within sight of the abbey at Muchelney, just across the river.

Weave their thin dances on the meadow's breast,
And sharp rays pierce the tombs, and rouse the dead
from rest.

X.

He looks not long, — for down the stairs of stone
Footsteps are sounding, and from forth the pile
Passes the stranger, but not now alone.
'Here, brother Francis, let thy keys awhile
Rest in my keeping; I will thee assoil
From aught that in mine absence may befall;
So wilt thou spare thyself thy watch and toil
For my return; my blessing guards ye all;
For I must forth, when sorrow for my help doth call.'

XI.

The abbot speaks; and they two glide along
In the dim moonlight, till the meadow haze
Enwraps them from the sight: the trees among,
And down the windings of the gleamy ways
They pass; and cross the Parret-stream, ablaze
With flickering ripples; then they track the moor,
Even till they reach St. Mary's Priory;
Ere which, the dark-robed stranger goes before,
And without speech admits them through a lowly door.

XII.

It is an humble chamber; and a group
Of holy sisters, in their work of love,
Over some prostrate form are seen to stoop,
And in the feeble glimmering slowly move;
And now the abbot sees, bending above,

One stretched in anguish on the pavement there;
In wild unrest her white arms toss and rove;
On the dank floor is spread her tangled hair,
And with convulsive gasps she draws the sounding air.

XIII.

But see, she beckons, and he draweth near;
Again she beckons; and that sisterhood
Slowly retreat from what they may not hear;
The last is gone; — and now, with life endued,
The abbot's form that lady rose and viewed;
'Sir monk, I am not as I seem this hour!'
He trembles — nay, let no chill doubt intrude —
It is, it is — thine own, thy bride, thy flower,
The high-born Lady Agnes of St. Dunstan's tower!

CANTO THE LAST.

I.

'Here is no place for greeting: fly afar
Before the absent sisterhood return.
In my well-sembled agony, yon star
I watched, whose westering rays now faintly burn:
It symbols forth my fate; and wouldst thou learn
What bodes this meeting, ere it dips below
The mountain-range which thou canst just discern,
Safe refuge must be won; for as we go,
Shining, it bodeth joy — but sunken, tears and woe.'

II.

She speaks, and forth into the gleamy night
They pass together; dim and ill-defined
Their thoughts; — now wandering with the mazy light
Of the wan moon, now with the moaning wind.
Thus do great issues of a sudden joined
Benumb men's spirits; who in thrall endure
Waiting the judgment of the ordering mind,
Who clears the vision with her influence pure,
And lights up memory's lamps along the steep obscure.

III.

But whither shall they fly? — the night's high noon
Hath past, and she is faint and weary grown:
'Lady, the abbey-gate is reached full soon:
There can I hide thee; in those towers of stone
Are secret chambers kenned by me alone,
Where I can tend thee, while the coming day
Shall bring thee rest; then when its light hath flown,
Mine be it, in maturer thought, to say
How we may shape our course to regions far away.'

IV.

With hurried steps to gain those towers they press;
But ere they reached them, had that lady's sight
Not earthward drooped for very weariness,
She might have seen that clear symbolic light
First fainter wane, then vanish from the night.
The other marked its dying radiance well;
But he was one whom omens could not fright:

But, 'spite his better judgment, sooth to tell,
Faintness struck through his heart, and broke joy's
rapturous spell.

V.

The abbot sitteth in his chamber lone,
And by him sits the lady of his love;
The crosier leans upon the fretted stone,
Swept by the sacred vestment from above:
He prayeth not — for he can never move
His fond eyes from that lovely lady's brow;
Whose downcast looks seem gently to reprove
The scheme that riseth in their wishes now —
To doff the saintly veil, and break the chartered vow.

VI.

They gaze upon each other earnestly,
Scarce daring to discover but in look
What each might read of in the other's eye.
Belike ye wonder, what such question shook
The firm resolve that erst their spirits took; —
In sooth, God's vows were on them both; but yet
The first law in the heaven-descended book,
Firmer than veil or chartered vow, is set —
Quos Deus junxit, homo ne quis separet.

VII.

Oh, who can sound the depth of human joy,
The fathomless tranquillity of bliss!
Clear shine the eyes, when in their calm employ
They scan some form which they have wept to miss;

Quick through the being thrills the mystic kiss
Of wife, or clinging child; light pass the days
Though sad, with such to cheer; and sweet it is
To sit, and even unto tears to gaze
On flowers which Love hath given to bloom beside our ways.

VIII.

Long hours have flown, to wedded rapture given;
And now upon the dusk and dawning air,
Which murmurs, with its quick shrill pulses riven,
The matin-bell sounds forth, calling to prayer
The abbey-brotherhood and hamlets near:
Then spoke the abbot: 'Part we for an hour;
Then follow me into a refuge near,
A hiding-place within this solid tower,
Known but to those who here have held this highest power.'

IX.

He leadeth her a dark and narrow way,
Along the windings of that hidden stair;
They might see nothing of the rising day,
Until that he had brought his lady dear
Unto a chamber, rudely fashioned, near
The top roof of the abbey-pile, and lit
By one small window, where the hour of prayer
Secure from rude intrusion she might sit,
And watch the morning clouds along the landscape flit.

* * * * *

X.

'Say ye, she left Saint Mary's Priory
This night? — perchance she roameth in the glade,
Or seeketh some lone cottage wearily:
Strict search for her in this our abbey made
Hath found no trace; each hiding-place displayed
Shows no such tenant: and our holy chief
Tells how he left her on your pavement laid,
What time she sunk exhausted by her grief,
After confession gave her prisoned woes relief.'

* * * * *

XI.

Past is all peril now — the search is done,
Past the spare meal, and spent the hour of prayer;
The holy men are singly pent each one
In chamber climbed by solitary stair:
And quickly as the anxious lover dare
He seeks with throbbing heart that nest secure:
'Rejoice, my wedded love, my life, my fair!
Our way is straight, our course is safe as pure,
Our life of love and joy from disappointment sure.'

XII.

He found her, — as ye find some cherished bud
Of early primrose, when the storm is past,
Crushed by the vexing of the tempest-flood; —
Prostrate and pale she lay, for Death had cast

His gorgon-spell upon her: thick and fast
The abbot's bursting heart did upward beat.
A while benumbed he stood: Reason at last
Fled with the wild crash from her central seat,
And all his soul within him burned with maddening heat.

* * * * *

XIII.

Three hundred years, above the tall elm-wood
One ivied pinnacle hath signified
The place where once the abbey-pile hath stood.
A hundred years before, the abbot died, —
A man of many woes: one summer-tide
They found his coffin in the churchyard-wall;
And when they forced the stony lid aside,
Gazed on his face beneath the mouldered pall,
Even as the spirit left it — pale and tear-worn all.

XIV.

And often, down that dark and narrow way,
Along the windings of that hidden stair,
Sweeps a dim figure, as the rustics say,
And tracks the path even to the house of prayer:
What in the dusky night it doeth there,
None may divine, nor its return have met;
Only, upon the hushed and listening air
Strange words, as men pass by, are sounding yet:
Quos Deus junxit, homo ne quis separet.

THE BALLAD OF GLASTONBURY.

INTRODUCTION.

Glastonbury, anciently called Avalon, is a place much celebrated both in tradition and history. It was here, according to old legends, when the neighboring moors were covered by the sea, that St. Joseph of Arimathea landed, and built the first church in England. It was here that the glorious king Arthur was buried, with the inscription:

Hic jacet Arturus, rex quondam, rexque futurus.

It was here that the scarcely less glorious King Alfred took sanctuary, and hence that he went into voluntary obscurity when the Danes invaded England. Here also was built that magnificent abbey, whose riches and hospitality were known to all Christendom. Its last abbot was murdered on the Tor-hill by order of Henry the Eighth, and the building was sacrificed to the misguided fury of the Reformation. The very ruins are now fast perishing.

The Quantock Hills, alluded to in the following poem, are in the autumn profusely covered with the mingled blossoms of heath and furze.

I.

The prospect of the western plains.

THE hills have on their royal robes
Of purple and of gold,
And over their tops the autumn clouds
In heaps are onward rolled;
Below them spreads the fairest plain
That British eye may see —
From Quantock to the Mendip range,
A broad expanse and free.[1]

[1] The magnificent views from the Quantock hills above Nether Stowey, where this poem was written, embrace the whole of the moor district of Somersetshire, with the bare hills and wooded capes which bound this singular tract of country, and the Tor of Glastonbury and Mendip hills in the distance.

II.

An invocation of Time, to open the days past.

As from those barriers, grey and vast,
Rolled off the morning mist,
Leaving the eyesight unrestrained
To wander where it list,
So roll, thou ancient chronicler,
The ages' mist away;
Give me an hour of vision clear,
A dream of the former day.

III.

A vision is vouchsafed.

At once the flood of the Severn sea
Flowed over half the plain,
And a hundred capes, with huts and trees,
Above the flood remain:
'T is water here and water there,
And the lordly Parret's way
Hath never a trace on its pathless face —
As in the former day.

IV.

The ship of St. Joseph, and how it sped.

Of shining sails that thronged that stream
There resteth never a one;
But a little ship to that inland sea
Comes bounding in alone;
With stretch of sail and tug of oar
It comes full merrily,
And the sailors chant, as they pass the shore,
Tibi gloria Domine.

V.

'Nights and days on the watery ways
Our vessel hath slidden on,
Our arms have never tired of toil,
Our stores have long been done;
Sweet Jesus hath sped us over the wave,
By coasts and along the sea,
And we sing, as we pass each rising land,
Tibi gloria Domine.

VI.

'Sweet Jesus hath work for us to do
In a land of promise fair;
Our vessel is steered by an angel-hand
Until it bring us there:
To our Captain given, a sign from heaven
Our token true shall be;
And we sing, as we wait for the Promise-sign,
Tibi gloria Domine.

VII.

The sign of promise given to him;

'When a dark green hill shall spire aloft
Into the pure blue sky,
Most like to Tabor's holy mount
Of vision blest and high;
Straight to that hill our bounding prow
Unguided shall pass and free;
Sweet Jesus hath spoken, and we believe;
Tibi gloria Domine'

VIII.

Thus far they sung, and at once a shout
Peeled upward loud and clear;
For, lo! the vessel onward ran
With never a hand to steer;
And full in sight that Promise-hill
Towered up into the sky,
Most like to Tabor's holy mount
Of vision blest and high.

And fulfilled.

IX.

Now raise the song, ye faithful crew,
Let all the uplands hear;
It fitteth Salvation's messengers
To be of joyous cheer;
For Avalon isle ye make the while,
By angel-pilot's hand;
Right onward for that pointed hill,
Straight to the sloping land.

X.

Each arm is resting, and every eye
With thankful tear is bright;
Thus spake one high upon the prow,
Feeding his forward sight:
'The word of God is just and true,
And the mountains green that stand
To the left and right in the morning light
Lead on to our Promise-land.

XI.

'Sweet Jesus hath broken the sepulchre,
And pours His golden grace,
Clothing the earth with the joy of birth,
In every fairest place:
His servant asked a token sure,
And a token sure is given;
And He that lay in the garden-tomb
Is Lord of earth and heaven.'

XII.

They bless God on the strand of Avalon.

By this the vessel had floated nigh
To the turf upon the strand,
And first that holy man of joy
Stepped on the Promise-land;
Until the rest, in order blest,
Were ranged, and kneeling there,
Gave blessing to the God of heaven
In a lowly chanted prayer.

XIII.

Then over the brow of the seaward hill
In their order blest they pass,
At every change in the psalmody
Kissing the holy grass;
Till they come where they may see full near
That pointed mountain rise,
Darkening with itsancient cone
The light of the eastern skies.

XIV.

St. Joseph planteth his staff as a token.

'This staff hath borne me long and well,'
Then spake that Saint divine,
'Over mountain and over plain,
On quest of the Promise-sign;
For aye let it stand in this western land,
And God do more to me
If there ring not out from this realm about,
Tibi gloria Domine.'

XV.

The days of the ancient Church of Britain.

A cloud is on them — the vision is changed,
And voices of melody,
And a ring of harps, like twinkles bright,
Comes over the inland sea;
Long and loud is the chant of praise —
The hallowed ages glide;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XVI.

The mort d'Arthur.

With mourning stole and solemn step,
Up that same seaward hill,
There moved of ladies and of knights
A company sad and still;
There went before an open bier,
And, sleeping in a charm,
With face to heaven and folded palms
There lay an armed form.

XVII.

St. Joseph's staff hath budded, and bloometh at Christmas-tide.

It is the winter deep, and all
The glittering fields that morn
In Avalon's isle were over-snowed
The day the Lord was born;
And as they cross the northward brow,
See white, but not with snow,
The mystic thorn beside their path
Its holy blossoms show.

XVIII.

They carry him where from chapel low
Rings clear the angel-bell —
He was the flower of knights and lords,
So chant the requiem well:
His wound was deep, and his holy sleep
Shall last him many a day,
Till the cry of crime in the latter time
Shall melt the charm away.

XIX.

The chronicle passeth to the pillage by the Danes.

A cloud is on them — the vision fades —
And cries of woe and fear,
And sounds unblest of neighboring war,
Are thronging on mine ear:
Long and loud was the battle-cry,
And the groans of them that died;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XX.

The great King Alfred in sorrow avoideth the foe.

From the postern-door of an abbaye pile
Passes with heavy cheer
A soldier-king in humble mien,
For the shouting foes are near;
The holy men by their altars bide,
In alb and stole they stand;
The incense-fumes the temple fill
From blessed children's hand.

XXI.

The ancient abbaye is burnt and pillaged.

Slow past the king that seaward brow,
Whence turning he might see,
Streaming upon Saint Michael's Tor,
The pagan blazonry;
Then a pealing shout and a silence long,
And rolling next on high
Dark vapor, laced with threads of flame,
Angered the twilight sky.

XXII.

But better days are near.

The cloud comes on — the vision is changed —
And songs of victory,
And hymns of praise to the Lord of Peace,
Comes over the inland sea;
The waters clear, the fields appear,
The plain is green and wide;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XXIII.

It is the high prime of Glastonbury's glory.

The plats were green with lavish growth,
And, like a silver cord,
Down to the northern bay the Brue
Its glittering water poured:
Far and near the pilgrims throng,
With staff and humble mien,
Where Glastonbury's crown of towers
Against the sky is seen.

XXIV.

By the holy thorn and the holy well,
And St. Joseph's silver shrine,
They offer thanks to highest Heaven
For the light and grace divine;
In the open cheer of the abbaye near,
They dwell their purposed day,
And then they part, with blessed thoughts,
Each on his homeward way.

XXV.

But pride cometh

The cloud drops down — the vision is changed,
And an altered sound of pride,
And a glitter of pomp is cast athwart
The meadows green and wide.
The servants of a lowly Lord
On earth's high places ride;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XXVI.

The strong man armed hath dwelt in peace — before a fall.
Till a stronger hath sacked his home;
And the Church that married the pride of the earth
By the earth is overcome:
There hath sounded forth upon the land
That wicked king's behest,
And Lust and Power from Lust and Power
A blighted triumph wrest.

XXVII.

The winds are high in Saint Michael's Tor, — Villanous doings for lucre's sake.
And a sorry sight is there —
A dark-browed band, with spear in hand,
Mount up the turret-stair;
With heavy cheer and lifted palms
There kneels a holy priest;
The fiends of death they grudge his breath,
To hold their rapine-feast.

XXVIII.

The cloud comes on them, the vision is changed, — The judgment of God on England.
And a crash of lofty walls,
And the short dead sound of music quenched,
On the sickened hearing falls;
Quick and sharp is the ruin-cry —
Unblest the ages glide;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XXIX.

But in it He hath remembered mercy.

Low sloping over sea and field
The setting ray had past,
On roofs and curls of quiet smoke
The glory-flush was cast.
Clustered upon the western side
Of Avalon's green hill,
Her ancient homes and fretted towers
Were lying, bright and still;

XXX.

And lower, in the valley-field,
Hid from the parting day,
A brotherhood of columns old,
A ruin rough and grey;
And over all, Saint Michael's Tor
Spired up into the sky —
Most like to Tabor's holy mount
Of vision blest and high.

XXXI.

The vision changeth not — no cloud
Comes down the Mendip side;
The moors spread out beneath my feet
Their free expanse and wide;
On glittering cots and ancient towers,
That rise among the dells,
On mountain and on bending stream
The light of evening dwells.

XXXII.

I may not write — I cannot say
What change shall next betide;
Whether that group of columns grey
Untroubled shall abide;
Or whether that pile in Avalon's isle
Some pious hand shall raise,
And the vaulted arches ring once more
With pealing chants of praise.

XXXIII.

Speed on, speed on: let England's sons
For England's glories rise;
And England's towers that lowly lie
Lift upward to the skies:
Till there go up from England's heart,
In peace and purity,
From temple-aisle and cottage-hearth,
Tibi gloria Domine.

LADY MARY.

Thou wert fair, Lady Mary,
As the lily in the sun :
And fairer yet thou mightest be,
Thy youth was but begun :
Thine eye was soft and glancing,
Of the deep bright blue ;
And on the heart thy gentle words
Fell lighter than the dew.

They found thee, Lady Mary,
With thy palms upon thy breast,
Even as thou hadst been praying,
At thine hour of rest :
The cold pale moon was shining
On thy cold pale cheek ;
And the morn of the Nativity
Had just begun to break.

They carved thee, Lady Mary,
All of pure white stone,
With thy palms upon thy breast,
In the chancel all alone :

And I saw thee when the winter moon
  Shone on thy marble cheek,
When the morn of the Nativity
  Had just begun to break.

But thou kneelest, Lady Mary,
  With thy palms upon thy breast,
Among the perfect spirits,
  In the land of rest:
Thou art even as they took thee
  At thine hour of prayer,
Save the glory that is on thee
  From the Sun that shineth there.

We shall see thee, Lady Mary,
  On that shore unknown,
A pure and happy angel
  In the presence of the throne;
We shall see thee when the light divine
  Plays freshly on thy cheek,
And the resurrection morning
  Hath just begun to break.

HYMN TO THE SUN.

Methinks my spirit is too free
  To come before thy presence high,
  Obtruding on the earth and sky
Aught but their solemn joy at greeting thee;
Methinks I should confess
  Some awe at standing in the way
  Of this thy pomp at birth of day,
Troubling thy sole unrivalled kingliness.

Glorious conqueror, unfolding
  Over the purple distance
  Thy might beyond resistance
Upon the charmed earth, that waits beholding
The fulness of thy glory, ere she dare
  To tell thee she rejoices
  With all her myriad voices,
Too modest-meek thy first-born joys to share.

As the mingled blazing
  Of a pomp of armed bands,
  Over a strait into other lands,
Gladdens the sea-boy from the cliff-side gazing;

Watching the dazzling triumph pass,
  Rolling onward deep and bright
  With shifting waves of light,
From floating of crimson banners, and horns of
    wreathed brass;

As the beacon to that scout of old,
  Searching the benighted sky
  With watch-wearied eye,
Brought sudden gratulation manifold;
Bridging all the furrowed waves between
  Ida and Athos, and the Lemnian steep,
  And Ægiplanctus, and the deep
Roll of the bay of Argos, with a track of sheen;[1]

So joyous on this eastward-fronting lawn
  After the keen-starred night
  The lifting of thy light
Fulfilleth all the promise of the dawn;
Like the bursting of a golden flood
  Now flowing onward fast
  Over the dewy slopes, now cast
Among flushed stems on yonder bank of wood.

With such a pomp methinks thou didst arise
  When hand in hand, divinely fair,
  The fresh-awakened pair
Stood gazing from thick-flowered Paradise;

[1] Æschyl. Agamemnon. The scout was set on the palace of Agamemnon at Mycenæ, to receive by beacons the intelligence of the capture of Troy.

Uncertain whether thou wert still the same
They saw sink down at night,
Or some great new-created light,
Or the glory of some seraph as he downward came.

Thus didst thou rise that first unclouded morn
Over the waters blank and still,
When on the Assyrian hill
Rested the ark, and the new world was born;
And when upon the strange unpeopled land,
With hands outspread and lifted eyes,
Stood round the primal sacrifice,
Under a bright-green mount, the patriarchal band.

With seven-fold glory thou shalt usher in
The new and mighty birth
Of the latter earth;
With seven days' light that morning shall begin,
Waking new songs and many an Eden-flower;
While over the hills and plains shall rise
Bright groups and saintly companies,
And never a cloud shall blot thee — never a tempest lour.

HYMN TO THE SEA.

Who shall declare the secret of thy birth,
Thou old companion of the circling earth?
And having reached with keen poetic sight
Ere beast or happy bird
Through the vast silence stirred,
Roll back the folded darkness of the primal night?

Corruption-like, thou teemedst in the graves
Of mouldering systems, with dark weltering waves
Troubling the peace of the first mother's womb;
Whose ancient awful form,
With inly-tossing storm,
Unquiet heavings kept — a birth-place and a tomb.

Till the life-giving Spirit moved above
The face of the waters, with creative love
Warming the hidden seeds of infant light:
What time the mighty word
Through thine abyss was heard,
And swam from out thy deeps the young day heavenly bright.

Thou and the earth, twin-sisters, as they say,
In the old prime were fashioned in one day;
And therefore thou delightest evermore
With her to lie and play
The summer hours away,
Curling thy loving ripples up her quiet shore.

She is a married matron long ago,
With nations at her side; her milk doth flow
Each year: but thee no husband dares to tame;
Thy wild will is thine own,
Thy sole and virgin throne —
Thy mood is ever changing — thy resolve the same.

Sunlight and moonlight minister to thee; —
O'er the broad circle of the shoreless sea
Heaven's two great lights for ever set and rise;
While the round vault above,
In vast and silent love,
Is gazing down upon thee with his hundred eyes.

All night thou utterest forth thy solemn moan,
Counting the weary minutes all alone;
Then in the morning thou dost calmly lie,
Deep-blue, ere yet the sun
His day-work hath begun,
Under the opening windows of the golden sky.

The Spirit of the mountain looks on thee
Over an hundred hills; quaint shadows flee
Across thy marbled mirror; brooding lie
Storm-mists of infant cloud,
With a sight-baulking shroud
Mantling the grey-blue islands in the western sky.

Sometimes thou liftest up thine hands on high
Into the tempest-cloud that blurs the sky,
  Holding rough dalliance with the fitful blast,
    Whose stiff breath, whistling shrill,
    Pierces with deadly chill
The wet crew, feebly clinging to their shattered mast.

Foam-white along the border of the shore
Thine onward-leaping billows plunge and roar;
  While o'er the pebbly ridges slowly glide
    Cloaked figures, dim and grey,
    Through the thick mist of spray,
Watchers for some struck vessel in the boiling tide.

Daughter and darling of remotest eld —
Time's childhood and Time's age thou hast beheld;
  His arm is feeble, and his eye is dim:
    He tells old tales again —
    He wearies of long pain:
Thou art as at the first: thou journeyedst not with him.

TO A DROP OF DEW.

Sun-begotten, ocean-born,
Sparkling in the summer morn
Underneath me as I pass
O'er the hill-top on the grass,
All among thy fellow-drops
On the speary herbage-tops,
Round, and bright, and warm, and still,
Over all the northern hill; —
Who may be so blest as thee,
Of the sons of men that be?
Evermore thou dost behold
All the sunset bathed in gold;
Then thou listenest all night long
To the leaves' faint undersong
From two tall dark elms, that rise
Up against the silent skies:
Evermore thou drink'st the stream
Of the chaste moon's purest beam;
Evermore thou dost espy
Every star that twinkles by;

Till thou hearest the cock crow
From the barton[1] far below;
Till thou seest the dawn-streak
From the eastern night-clouds break;
Till the mighty king of light
Lifts his unsoiled visage bright,
And his speckled flocks has driven
To batten in the fields of heaven;
Then thou lightest up thy breast
With the lamp thou lovest best;
Many rays of one thou makest,
Giving three for one thou takest;
Love and constancy's best blue,
Sunny warmth of golden hue,
Glowing red, to speak thereby
Thine affection's ardency: —
Thus rejoicing in his sight,
Made a creature of his light,
Thou art all content to be
Lost in his immensity;
And the best that can be said,
When they ask why thou art fled,
Is, that thou art gone to share
With him the empire of the air.

[1] A word in use in the west of England for a farm-yard.

TO A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

I NAMED thee once 'the silver thread,'
When, in the burning summer day,
I stept across thy stony bed
Upon my homeward way.

For down an old rock's mossy steep,
Thy thin bright stream, as I past by,
Into a calm pool, clear and deep,
Slid down most peacefully.

But now it is the autumn eve,
Dark clouds are hurrying through the sky ;
Thy envious waters will not leave
One stone to cross thee by.

And all about that old steep rock
Thy foamy fall doth plash and roar,
Troubling with rude incessant shock
The pool so still before.

Thus happy childhood evermore,
  Beneath unclouded summer suns,
On to its little lucid store
  Of joy most calmly runs.

But riper age, with restless toil,
  Ever for ampler pleasures frets;
And oft with infinite turmoil
  Troubles the peace it gets.

ON THE AGED OAK

At Oakley, Somerset.

I was a young fair tree:
Each spring with quivering green
My bows were clad; and far
Down the deep vale, a light
Shone from me on the eyes
Of those who past — a light
That told of sunny days,
And blossoms, and blue sky:
For I was ever first
Of all the grove to hear
The soft voice under ground
Of the warm-working spring;
And ere my brethren stirred
Their sheathed buds, the kine,
And the kine's keeper, came
Slow up the valley-path,
And laid them underneath
My cool and rustling leaves;
And I could feel them there
As in the quiet shade

They stood, with tender thoughts,
That past along their life
Like wings on a still lake,
Blessing me ; — and to God,
The blessèd God, who cares
For all my little leaves,
Went up the silent praise ;
And I was glad, with joy
Which life of laboring things
Ill knows, — the joy that sinks
Into a life of rest.
Ages have fled since then : —
But deem not my pierced trunk
And scanty leafage serves
No high behest ; my name
Is sounded far and wide :
And in the Providence
That guides the steps of men,
Hundreds have come to view
My grandeur in decay ;
And there hath passed from me
A quiet influence
Into the minds of men :
The silver head of age,
The majesty of laws,
The very name of God,
And holiest things that are,
Have won upon the heart
Of humankind the more,
For that I stand to meet
With vast and bleaching trunk
The rudeness of the sky.

ON THE EVENING OF A VILLAGE FESTIVAL.

While our shrub-walks darken,
And the stars get bright aloft,
Still we sit and hearken
To the music low and soft;
By the old oak yonder,
Where we watch the setting sun,
Listening to the far-off thunder
Of the multitude as one:

Sit, my best beloved,
In the waning light;
Yield thy spirit to the teaching
Of each sound and sight:
While those sounds are flowing
To their silent rest;
While the parting wake of sunlight
Broods along the west.

Sweeter 'tis to hearken
Than to bear a part;
Better to look on happiness,
Than to carry a light heart:

Sweeter to walk on cloudy hills
With a sunny plain below,
Than to weary of the brightness
Where the floods of sunshine flow.

Souls that love each other
Join both joys in one ;
Blest by other's happiness,
And nourished by their own :
So with quick reflection,
Each its opposite
Still gives back, and multiplies
To infinite delight.

LAST WORDS.

Refresh me with the bright-blue violet,
And put the pale faint-scented primrose near,
For I am breathing yet:
Shed not one silly tear;
But when mine eyes are set,
Scatter the fresh flowers thick upon my bier,
And let my early grave with morning dew be wet.

I have passed swiftly o'er the pleasant earth,
My life hath been the shadow of a dream;
The joyousness of birth
Did ever with me seem:
My spirit had no dearth,
But dwelt for ever by a full swift stream,
Lapt in a golden trance of never-failing mirth.

Touch me once more, my father, ere my hand
Have not an answer for thee; — kiss my cheek
Ere the blood fix and stand
Where flits the hectic streak;
Give me thy last command,
Before I lie all undisturbed and meek,
Wrapt in the snowy folds of funeral swathing-band.

ἱερὸν ὕπνον
κοιμᾶται.

'Father, wake — the storm is loud,
The rain is falling fast;
Let me go to my mother's grave,
And screen it from the blast:
She cannot sleep, she will not rest,
The wind is roaring so;
We prayed that she might lie in peace —
My father, let us go.'

'Thy mother sleeps too firm a sleep
To heed the wind that blows;
There are angel-charms that hush the noise
From reaching her repose.
Her spirit in dreams of the blessed Land
Is sitting at Jesu's feet;
Child, nestle thee in mine arms and pray
Our rest may be as sweet.'

THE ANCIENT MAN.

THERE is an ancient man who dwells
  Without our parish-bounds,
Beyond the poplar-avenue,
  Across two meadow-grounds;
And whensoe'er our two small bells
  To church call merrily,
Leaning upon our churchyard gate
  This old man ye may see.

He is a man of many thoughts,
  That long have found their rest,
Each in its proper dwelling-place
  Settled within his breast:
A form erect, a stately brow,
  A set and measured mien —
The satisfied unroving look
  Of one who much hath seen.

And once, when young in care of souls,
  I watched a sick man's bed,
And willing half, and half ashamed,
  Lingered, and nothing said:

The ancient man, in accents mild,
Removed my shame away —
'Listen!' he said; 'the minister
Prepares to kneel and pray.'

These lines of humble thankfulness
Will never meet his eye;
Unknown that old man means to live,
And unremembered die.
The forms of life have severed us —
But when that life shall end,
Fain would I hail that reverend man
A father and a friend.

THE LITTLE MOURNER.

'Child, whither goest thou
Over the snowy hill?
The frost-air nips so keen
That the very clouds are still:
From the golden folding curtains
The sun hath not looked forth,
And brown the snow-mist hangs
Round the mountains to the north.'

'Kind stranger, dost thou see
Yonder church-tower rise,
Thrusting its crown of pinnacles
Into the looming skies? —
Thither go I: — keen the morning
Bites, and deep the snow;
But, in spite of them,
Up the frosted hill I go.'

'Child, and what dost thou
When thou shalt be there? —
The chancel-door is shut —
There is no bell for prayer;

Yester-morn and yester-even
Met we there and prayed;
But now none is there
Save the dead lowly laid.'

'Stranger, underneath that tower,
On the western side,
A happy, happy company
In holy peace abide;
My father, and my mother,
And my sisters four —
Their beds are made in swelling turf,
Fronting the western door.'

'Child, if thou speak to them,
They will not answer thee;
They are deep down in earth, —
Thy face they cannot see.
Then wherefore art thou going
Over the snowy hill?
Why seek thy low-laid family
Where they lie cold and still?'

'Stranger, when the summer heats
Would dry their turfy bed,
Duly from this loving hand
With water it is fed;
They must be cleared this morning
From the thick-laid snow;
So now along the frosted field,
Stranger, let me go.'

A DREAM.

The night that is now past hath been to me
A time of wakeful, sleepful fancies: oft
Have I been whirled aloft and rapt away
By some fierce gale: oft in some garden-plot
Laid, in the scent of woodbine and of lilac,
While the laburnum hung its yellow locks
Above me, prisoning in, with flowery chains,
A slumbrous nook, aglow with golden light.
Before that night a weary time had past,
A night of anxious thoughts and prayers,
And they have left their traces on my spirit,
Now that pure calm hath come, and thankful joy.
But most of all, one dream I will relate,
Of import not obscure: — 't is a strange tale —
An errant, broken tale; and as the tale,
The measure wanders. Listen: it ran thus.

THE DREAM.

I.

Light was upon the sea —
The calm unbroken mirror
Of the level sea!
And ye might look around

For many a league each way,
And ye should see no moving thing,
Nor object that had shape:
But light upon the sea!
The calm unbroken mirror
Of the level sea!

A dimple in the centre of the view!
And then a spreading circle,
One and then another,
Onward, outward spreading:
Even to the verge of heaven
Do those circles calmly roll;
And the sleeping light
Is all disquieted,
And leaps among the shining furrows
Of the waveful sea!

From the centre rising
Is a pillar mist-enwrapt,
A shining chrysalis
Of some being beautiful;
For, lo, the mist is clearing,
And a perfect form
Is hovering o'er the gently swelling waves;
A perfect form, but small
As is some fairy sprite
Of mediæval tales.

II.

The mighty sea again!
And now the eastern sun

Shone freshly on the water,
That leapt and sparkled bright,
As joyous for the sheen;
Each wavelet had its crest
Of dancing shivering foam;
And far as ye might see
Into the glowing south
They chased each other merrily.
Not as before, unbounded,
Was the gladsome sea:
A shore with beetling cliffs
Hung o'er the breaking spray,
And pure white sands beneath
Bordered a breezy bay;
And sporting on those sands
That same fair form I saw.

Now would he lie and gaze
Up to the deep-blue heaven;
Now count the sparkling stones
Within his infant reach;
Now listen the curved shells
Answering the ocean's roar;
Now would he tempt those waters
Unclothed and beautiful
As is some ancient marble
Of love's winged god,
And float in ecstasy
Over the floating waves,
And let them bear him onward
To the smooth sand's verge.

III.

I saw the sea again!
But it was now once more
The great unbounded ocean,
But not mirror-calm,
Nor in wavelets broken:
It was in tumult dire
Of angry tossing billows,
Like unquiet monsters
Rolling in their agony
Over their watery couch.

And ere I long had looked,
Again appeared that form,
Now stronger knit, and grown
Even to years mature.
His strength had trial sore;
For in that plunge of waters
A little boat he guided,
Rowing with all his power,
And guiding while he rowed.
Loud creaked his burdened barque
Not long: a crested billow
Fell headlong, and the vessel
Was seen no more; but him
I saw with vigorous stroke
Mounting the valley-sides
Between the towering waves.

IV.

Still the cliff-bounded sea!
And it was summer noon,

And all the land was still;
But on the water's face
The merry breeze was playing,
Whitening a chance wave here and there;
And the dipping sea-birds
Sported, and screamed around;
And numberless white sails
Spotted the pleasant water —
It was a sight of joy,
That made the bosom full!

Anon a gay and gallant boat
Flew by with canvass stretched
And straining to the wind,
Crushing each wave and making music harsh
As on its way it sped.
In it was that same form,
The spectre of my dream,
Now in mid years, and pale
Methought, and over-watched;
But he was not alone:
A light and lovely shape,
Beside him sitting there,
Steered that his boat along.

Right joyously she went,
And merry was the sound
Of voice, and voice replying,
Just wafted to my ears
As the trim vessel passed.

V.

'T is evening on the sea!
The fiery orb of heaven
Hath hid his last bright twinkle
Under yon western line;
And no star yet looks forth
From the blank unvaried sky.
Again 't is breathless calm
Upon the ocean's face;
And the grey mournful light
Lies still upon the water,
Save where the cliff high-turreted
Is imaged deep beneath.

Among the rocks, surf-whitened,
Sitting, or wandering slow,
Was that same form again—
Alone, and sorrow-marked;
His eye was lustreless,
And ever and anon
He raised his hands aloft,
And spoke to one above him;
But, as it seemed, none heard,
For still he wandered sad,
And I could see the tears
Spring from his brimming eyes,
And fall upon those rocks.

And once again he looked
Into the fading sky,
Where one scarce-visible star
Had lit its twinkling lamp;

Which when he saw, he smiled,
And a more copious flood
Of tears rained down his cheek;
Till on those barren stones,
For very weariness of grief,
He laid him down to die.

VI.

It was the noon of night —
Upon the ocean's breast
The vast concave of heaven
Was downward imaged, bright
With throbbing stars: no rest
The roving eye might find;
Horizon there was none,
But vast infinitude
Spread over and below.

Down from the upper air
Self-poised, a pillar glided,
Such as I saw erewhile,
But dark and mournful all:
Then first was manifest
The polished ocean-surface;
For into its calm breast
Passed this array of woe;
And I could see, as slow
It sunk, that same appearance,
But in a dismal garb
Of death-array. The sea
Closed over, without noise.

My dream was done; but as I woke, clear sounds
As of celestial music were around me;
And spite of that last scene of death and woe,
My spirit was all-joyous; and the day
Throughout, some voice was sounding in my ear,
'He is not here, but risen!'
My dream was, LIFE.

May 8, 1840.

A SPRING SCENE.

A mossy bank: a young mother sits with her babe and an elder child.

MOTHER.

So thou hast brought thy bosom full of daisies
And gilded celandine. There, pour them forth —
A pretty April snow-storm. Now enfold
Thine arms about thy little sister's neck,
And gladden her with kisses.

[*They are silent awhile.*

Thou bright ineloquent blue of the vast heaven,
Thou ocean studded with thine isle of light,
And thou all-wrapping, all-sufficing air —
How full are ye of mystery! what hosts
But now are winging through this visible round
Their spirit-way! what throbbings of deep joy
Pulsate through all I see, from the full bud
Whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the noon,
Up through the system of created things,
Even to the flaming ranks of seraphim!
And I and my beloved ones are part
Of the world's hymn of praise, — a happy group

Of the Eternal's moulding, — gazed upon
Perchance of angels; thicker with rich gems
Of his own setting, than the guardian shrine
Of some cathedralled saint with offered jewels.
Shame upon Time, that will write age and care
Upon your velvet cheeks, my little ones —
That will dry up the bosom where ye nestle —
Yea, that in one short day can turn the vault
Of this unspotted, glorious firmament
Into a dark-grey wilderness of clouds
Hurrying to blot heaven's light! Shame upon Time!

CHILD.

Mamma, will the weather be as fine in heaven?

MOTHER.

Thanks for that artless question. I was growing
Mindless of that great spring which knows no check.
Yes, little prattlers, you may fancy heaven
A sky for ever blue — a laughing sun
That knows no flitting shadows — a fair lawn
Besprinkled with your favorite flowers, and birds
Pouring around their gushing melodies;
And you, and this soft little one, and me,
Sitting as we sit now, but all enwrapt
With lustrous beauty and unearthly light.
Thus now; — but you will grow, and then your fancy
Will alter — and your heaven no more be this,
But the lone walk with one whom love hath knit
Into your very soul; while nightingale
From blosmy hawthorn's heart awakes the night
To praise — and o'er ye both, from myriad stars,

The mighty presence of the Eternal Love
Falls, as the dewy odors on the air,
The incense of the temple where ye roam.
Then life perchance will change afresh; and love
Be reft of its support, and stand alone:
And then your heaven will be a loftier thing,
A gazing on the open face of God, —
Knowledge, and light, and the unbounded sea
Of presences seraphic. Then, my child,
Life will go onward yet, and will become
Labor and sorrow, and your beauty-dreams,
Will have passed by, and all your high desires
Have sunk away; — and then your heaven will be
Wherever there is rest; and so the way
Down to the grave — a thing you love not now —
Will be smoothed off and altered as it nears,
Till you shall e'en desire it for its sake.

CHILD.

Sing me a song about the sky in heaven.

MOTHER.

Fade, fade away,
Close by night, and droop by day,
Little gilded flower:
Thou hast brethren up above
Watered by Eternal Love,
In our Father's bower.

Roll, onward roll,
Veil the sun and gloom the pole,

Dark and dismal cloud :
There are skies in heaven above
Where the glorious sun of love
Shines without a shroud.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE RUIN OF A VILLAGE CROSS, HATHERN, LEICESTERSHIRE.

The simple folk once used to throng
These mouldering steps beneath,
And every child that passed along
Its soft petitions breathe,
In pious days of yore.

The working men at dawn of day
Were here assembled kneeling,
And to their labor bore away
A calm of holy feeling,
In Christian days of yore.

Till once a stalwart company
Of men with gloomy faces,
Unlike the men ye used to see
In such-like holy places,
In quiet days of yore,

With savage hands pulled down the sign
Of our Redeemer's sorrow,
And promised in more force to join,
And break the rest to-morrow,—
Hating the days of yore.

But Providence from then till now
This remnant hath befriended,
And by this shaft and time-worn steps
The memory hath defended
Of the good days of yore.

And still, whene'er the good and great
On common times pass nigh me,
Though no petition they repeat,
Nor kneel in silence by me,
As in the days of yore;

Yet blessed thoughts upon their hearts
From Heaven come gently stealing;
And each from this grey ruin parts
With calmer, holier feeling,
Blessing the days of yore.

THE DEAD.

The dead alone are great!
While heavenly plants abide on earth,
The soil is one of dewless dearth;
But when they die, a mourning shower
Comes down and makes their memories flower
With odors sweet though late.

The dead alone are fair!
While they are with us, strange lines play
Before our eyes, and chase away
God's light: but let them pale and die,
And swell the stores of memory —
There is no envy there.

The dead alone are dear!
While they are here, long shadows fall
From our own forms, and darken all:
But when they leave us, all the shade
Is round our own sad footsteps made,
And they are bright and clear.

The dead alone are blest!
While they are here, clouds mar the day,
And bitter snow-falls nip their May;
But when their tempest-time is done,
The light and heat of Heaven's own Sun
Broods on their land of rest.

WRITTEN ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1836.

The earth is clad
For her bridal glad;
Her robe is white
As the spotless light;
O'er field and hill
Its folds are still.

From her aery throne
The moon looks down,
Clothing with glory
The tree-tops hoary,
Which glittering are
Like purest spar.

A star or two
Diamond-blue
Through the space peers
Where the vapor clears,
And in long white masses
Silently passes.

The wind is awake,
And his voice doth shake
The frost from the trees;
Then by degrees
Swells with a louder sound,
Till it dies on the level ground.

FEBRUARY 10, 1840.

They saw thee kneel with lowly mien,
In faith a child, in state a queen;
No circlet girt thy marble brow
While at that altar thou didst bow;
And tears sprung forth from many an eye
In all that gorgeous company.

Around that brow, so high and fair,
The symbol of a kingdom's care,
They bound a royal diadem,
Flashing with many a rarest gem;
And British hearts were proud to own
Thy peaceful sway, thy virgin throne.

Again thou kneelest — on that brow
A snowy veil is trembling now;
And as the solemn words pass by,
Thy woman's heart is throbbing high;
Nor e'er did cottage maid rejoice
In purer love — in freer choice.

Young Queen, as through the shadowy past
For glimpses of thy lot we cast,

And the dim things to come espy
Through the stern present's gathering sky,
Our tears fall from us as we pray
For blessings on thy bridal day!

THE NATIONAL PRAYER.

October, 1840.

From our aisles of places holy,
From our dwellings calm and lowly,
On the autumn breezes slowly
Swells the sound of prayer:
God! before thy footstool bending —
Anxious crowds their heart-wish blending,
To thine heaven their vows are sending —
Make our Queen thy care!

Brighter than our pomp and pleasure,
Precious above every treasure,
Dear beyond all human measure,
Is that life we love:
Saviour, slumbering not nor sleeping,
But thy watch in danger keeping,
Hear our prayer, receive our weeping —
Guard her from above!

THE DIRGE OF THE PASSING YEAR.

1840.

Bring flowers — but not the gay,
The tender, or the sweet;
But such as winter's chill winds lay
Faded and dank across the spray,
Or strew beneath the feet.

Bring flowers to strew the bier:
He will be ready soon;
Already are his beauties sere;
And the much-hailed, time-honored year
To death is passing down.

He hath a warrior been;[1]
And in the hallowed clime,
Where spiry rock and dark ravine
Guard the old cedar's solemn green,
Hath sped the march of Time.

[1] The Capture of St. Jean d'Acre.

He hath, in happy mood,
Turned priest, and charmed the spot
Where in her queenly womanhood
Our nation's hope betrothed stood,
Blest beyond queenly lot.

And he hath bent in prayer
To the great God above,
In peril that dear life to spare,
And o'er that young and royal pair
To spread his shield of love.

He hath his voice upsent,
In minster and in aisle,
'Ye creatures of the dust, repent!
He comes to claim what He hath lent —
'T is yet a little while!'

His duties have been hard,
Yet hath he done them well:
He smote not where he should have spared;
But where his God the victim bared,
His sword of justice fell.

The friend, the wife, the child —
Some took he, and some left;
He hath been cursed with curses wild —
Yet with his healing influence mild
Soothed he the soul bereft.

And he is dying now:
But yet once more again

Shall we behold him, not as now, —
But a dread form with awful brow,
Judging the sons of men.

Then will he tell his tale —
All hidden shall be shown;
Then will the iron-hearted quail,
The proud fall low, the strong man fail,
When all his words are known.

Then bring sweet flowers and gay —
Of holy thought and deed;
Deck well his bier, that so we may
Look on him at that wrathful day
From fear and anguish free.

NOTTINGHAM MECHANICS' EXHIBITION, 1840.[1]

Bright glowed the canvass, or with chastened light
Of the wan moon was tinted; features mild
With hopes angelic — glorious visions wild,
Fixed by Eternal Art — were there; the sight
Might rest on marble forms, perfect in grace
Symmetric, nymph, or hero half divine,
Or the calm hush of slumber infantine; —
Nature had sent her stores to fill the place:
All dazzling plumes on bird or moth bestowed,
Clear spiry crystals, grots of massive spar: —
So that it seemed all choicest things that are
Within those precincts had their blest abode;
And he who through these halls unknowing went,
Might ask for what high presence all was meant?

Nor long should he inquire, ere he should meet
Not sweeping trains of pomp and courtly pride,
Illustrious visitant, or fêted bride,
Or whispering fall of beauty's dainty feet,

[1] The nobility and gentry of the county and neighborhood lent their pictures and works of art for this exhibition; an example now not unfrequent, and every where to be followed.

But the hard tramp of rustic, and the gaze
Of the pale-faced mechanic, and the eye
Unused before to stretch its aim so high,
Lit with the promise of aspiring days.
Prosper such work of love; and may the halls
Which, in glad zeal to feed the nation's heart,
Have lacked awhile their gorgeous stores of art,
Teem with pure joy — the while their envied walls
Shine with adornments richer and more rare —
For the ten thousands who their beauties share.

LINES WRITTEN OCTOBER 23, 1836,

A FEW HOURS AFTER THE BIRTH OF MY FIRST CHILD.

Beautiful babe, I gaze upon thy face
That bears no trace of earth — thy silk-soft cheek
Gladdens me even to tears — and thy full eyes
Blue as the midnight heaven; — what thoughts are they
That flit across thy being, now faint smiles
Awakening, now thy tiny fairy fingers
Weaving in restless play? — above thee bends
An eye that drinks sweet pleasure from thine own,
A face of meaning wonderful and deep,
A form in every member full of love.
Once thou wert hidden in her painful side,
A boon unknown, a mystery and a fear;
Strange pangs she bore for thee; but He, whose name
Is everlasting Love, hath healed her pain,
And paid her suffering hours with living joy.
Thou gentle creature, now thine eyes are hid
In soft Elysian sleep: — a holy calm
Hath settled on thee, and thy little hands
Are folded on thy breast. Thus could I look

For ever on thee, babe, with yearning heart
And strange unwonted pleasure.
And thou, too,
Sweet mother, hast been dallying with sleep
Till thou hast yielded — and I sit alone,
Alone, as if by Providence divine,
To watch in spirit, and in peaceful verse
To speak my thankfulness and purest joy.
— Some, with the gift of song, have prophesied
High duties for their offspring, — and the words,
Fresh from the parent heart, have wrought a charm
Upon their childhood and their growing youth;
And life hath taken color from their love.
— And thou, my little Alice, now so frail,
So new to the new world, in after-years
Shalt feel the wondrous tide of poesy
Rise in thy swelling breast; — the happy earth,
And every living thing — spring with its leaves,
And summer clad in flowers, and autumn flush
With ripe abundance, and the winter frost,
Shall lay the deep foundations of thy soul
In peace and purity — thence thou shalt love
The tale of strange adventure; — watch the dance
Of moonlit fairies on the crisping grass, —
And nurse thy little joys unchecked and free
With rhymes antique and laughter-loving sports,
With wanton gambols in the sunny air,
And in the freshening bath of rocky streams.
But God hath knowledge of the years between:
Fair be thy lot, my first and early born —
The pledge and solace of our life-long love.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1836.

The stars are clear and frosty, and the Earth
Is laid in her first sleep, secure and calm;
The glorious works of God, as at the first,
Are very good. It is the blessed night
When, if the say of ancient chronicles
Deceive not, no ill spirit walks abroad;
A night for holy prayers and fancies pure;
A night when solitude in bed and board
Might frame itself celestial company
Out of its peopled thoughts.
But here with me
Are two, on whom toil and the quiet time
Have wrought sweet slumber; and by breathings soft
They testify their presence to my heart,
And waken kindly thoughts.
My earliest loved —
Thou who, in laughing childhood and ripe youth,
Wast ever mine — with whose advancing thought
I grew entwined — and who, in time, didst yield
Thy maiden coyness, and in mystic band
Didst link thyself to me — one heart, one life

Binds us together; in the inmost soul
Either is known to other; and we walk
The daily path of unrecorded life,
Blest with a double portion of God's love.
And thou, in thy warm nook beside our bed,
Peacefully wrapt in slumber infantine,
Thou treasure newly found of springing joy —
Thou jewel in the coronet of love —
Thou little flower, a choice plant's earliest gem —
Thou brightest morning-star, by Love divine
Set on the forehead of the hopeful east, —
Thou reckest not of time; our human names
Mould not thy varying moods; if marking aught,
Measuring thy days by still-expected hours
Of soft appliance to thy mother's breast;
And yet methinks so hallowed is the time,
That even thy cushioned cheek hath trace of it,
Clothed in a deeper and peculiar calm.
The blessings of a kindly Providence
Light on ye both; the way of life, not dark
With gathering storms as yet, invites us on;
We must advance, in threefold union strong,
And strong in Him who bound our lives in God.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF 'THE REVOLT OF ISLAM,'

GIVEN AS A WEDDING-PRESENT TO HER WHO IS ADDRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING LINES, BUT ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO MYSELF BY THE LAMENTED ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM.

Beloved, to whose wedded hand I trust
This treasure of sweet song, it is but meet
That thou shouldst know its value; that the gift
May have its honor, and the giver share
His meed of grateful love.
No common price
Attends this wedding-gift; for blessed eyes
Have looked upon its pages — eyes whose light
Gladdened a circle of united hearts,
While yet they shone; and now that they are quenched
In the cold grave, they dwell upon our souls,
A memory that can never die — a power
That may not pass away. 'T was not thy lot
To know and love him: let it be enough
That oft his lips pronounced thy name with love,
As one he fain would know, in happy days
Of youthful confidence and sacred joy.
He lived in love; and God, whose son he was,
Not willing that the spirit pure should pass

Into the dim and damping atmosphere
Of these our earthly haunts and scenes of care,
While yet the hills and skies and common sights
O'erflowed his soul with joy, and wondrous thoughts
Sprung burning in his heart, fetched him away
To the unwithering banks and deep-green glades
Where flows the River of Eternal Truth.
Be then by thee this gift as precious held
As is his memory by the giver; look
On every page with inly fervent heart;
Learn lessons of pure beauty, and to shun
Only the errors of the poet's creed,
Yielding free duty to his code of love.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A BLOCK OF GRANITE ON THE SURFACE OF THE MER DE GLACE.[1]

See me, by elemental warfare torn
From yonder peak's aerial crest,
Now on the rifted breast
Of this ice-ocean borne
By ministering ages without fail
Down to my rest
Among the shattered heaps in yonder deep-set vale.

Grey am I, for my conflict with the powers
Of air doth never cease; around
My lifted head doth sound
The voice of all the hour
Struck forth in tempest; from my fretted side
The snows rebound:
The avalanche's spray-balls in my rifts abide.

Glory and ruin doth my course behold;
After each wild and dreadful night
The day-birth heavenly bright
Floods all this vale with gold;

[1] We were informed by our Chamounix guide that these blocks are borne downwards by the slow motion of the whole of the vast glacier on which they are lying, and that from year to year their change of place is just perceptible.

And when the day sinks down, on every peak
Last shafts of light
The downward fading sky with lines of ruby streak.

All summer long the moan of many woods
Comes to me, and from far conveyed
The tumbling of the low cascade,
And rush of valley floods.
The lavish rock-rose clothes with crimson hue
Each upward glade,
And the Alp-violet strews its stars of brightest blue.

Thus slowly down long ages shall I pass,
Unnoticed, save by practised eye
Of them who use thus high
The traveller's steps to lead;
Then when the years by God apportionèd
Shall have past by
Leap from the lofty brink, and fill the vale with dread.

TO A MOONBEAM, BY OUR FIRE-SIDE.

What dost thou here?
A drop of strange cold light
After thy airy flight
Of many a thousand league of sky?
Like glow-worm, or the sparkling eye
Of snake, dost thou appear
By this my nightly fire, among these faces dear.

Why art thou come?
Is it that night is bleak,
And thou in vain dost seek
Some refuge from the chilly wind?
And thou no better nook couldst find
In earth or heaven's high dome,
To nestle and be warm, than this our peopled home?

Now thou art gone,
And all thy light dost shroud
In some swart-bosomed cloud,
Or waitest on thy mother dear,
Bridging her way with opal clear,
Till vapor there is none,
And silver-bright she walks her peaceful path alone.

Here and away,
Bound on no great behest,
A fleeting spark at best;
So high is heaven, or I so low,
That the least things that come and go
My wandering moods obey,
In thoughts that linger by me many a busy day.

A VILLAGE TALE.

RELATED ALMOST IN THE WORDS OF THE NARRATOR.

He was a blessed father; and he taught
Us, his four children (for in that my day
There were no schools as now) the way to read
The wonderful account, how this large world
Came into being, and the sun and moon,
And all the little stars that deck the heavens.
He loved my mother; and when her he lost,
And first came home among the sable train
Of mourners, and his desolation sank
Into his soul, we thought his heart would burst.
But soon he built him up another home
In a new partner's breast. She loved us all
As if we were her own: and 't would have made
Your heart rejoice to see my father sit
After his daily labor, self-deceived
Into domestic happiness, and blest
With us his rosy circle. But stern Death
Envied the healing of the breach he made,
And took our second mother. By this time
My father was in years; and I believe,

Without the two chairs filled beside the fire,
And some one to be busy and bear rule
In the house-matters, and to share his bed,
He would have known no peace. Therefore a third
He led to church, and brought to live with us —
But, oh, how changed was now our quiet hearth! —
A strange and wayward woman — one who went
From church to meeting, and then back to church,
And got no good from either. She would be
Days without speaking; and in sudden mood
Pour forth such hours of wild and rambling talk,
That we all shook to hear her. Happily
My father knew not all; unsensing age
Came fast upon him, and his daily meal
And daily fire, and journey to his bed,
Were all he sought or knew.

One winter night
I woke from sleep, and heard, or seemed to hear
Fierce struggling in their room, which joined our own.
There was no door; I left my bed, and crept
To the open ground-sill; but 't was quiet all,
And pitch, pitch dark. Whether she heard me there
I know not; but I had scarce regained my bed
When she came to me, flying like distraught,
'Jenny, your father's lying stiff and still,
And will not be awaked.' I thought it strange
That she should try to wake him at mid-night;
But I said nothing.

Sir, I said before
He was a blessed father; and we mourned
Our very hearts out. Long before this time
My sisters had been married: so 't was mine

To live with my strange mother. We were then
In the old meeting-house that was; you know
The place: the stones that were beside the hearth
Were coverings of graves. 'Tis a lone house —
A dismal, dismal place.
Well — from the hour
My father died, this woman had no peace.
By day she never kept to the same chair
Five minutes at a time. Now she would rise
And stir the fire, now stare into the street,
Now work a stitch or two; then fling her out
Without a hat or shawl, and roam about
The village and the fields; and in the night —
Oh, sir, 'twas dreadful — she would never go
Upstairs; but she and I slept in a bed
Placed in the lodging room, and all among
The grave-stones — trust me, 'twas a dismal thing.
All night she never slept; and when I woke,
Whether at midnight or in dawn of morn,
I felt her beating with her lifted hand
Backward and forward, all about her breast:
'Mother,' said I, (for though she was not so,
We always *mother'd* her,) 'you have not yet
Done beating of him off.' So she went on:
And happy, sir, was I when the time came
For me to leave her, and set up a home
Some twenty houses off, in love and peace,
With my own husband. We'd been married now
Some fifteen weeks, when, as I sat at work,
A neighbor came in haste, with wildered looks,
'Go to your mother.' Up I rose and went;
And oh, sir, what a scene: the doctor stood

With hands and arms all bloody, sewing up
A hideous wound. 'Oh, mother, what a deed
Have you been doing!' After that she lived
Three weeks, but never spoke; and as she lived,
So, sir, she died — a wretched, wicked woman,
With strange unbridled thoughts; and deeds — God
knows
What were her deeds: one day they will be shown.

BALLAD: 1845.

Rise, sons of merry England, from mountain and from plain;
Let each light up his spirit, let none unmoved remain;
The morning is before you, and glorious is the sun;
Rise up, and do your blessed work before the day be done.

'Come help us, come and help us,'—from the valley and the hill
To the ear of God in heaven are the cries ascending still:
The soul that wanteth knowledge, the flesh that wanteth food;—
Arise, ye sons of England, go about doing good.

Your hundreds and your thousands at usage and in purse,
Behold a safe investment, which shall bless and never curse!
Oh, who would spend for house or land, if he might but from above
Draw down the sweet and holy dew of happiness and love?

Pour out upon the needy ones the soft and healing
balm:
The storm hath not arisen yet — ye yet may keep the
calm;
Already mounts the darkness, — the warning wind is
loud:
But ye may seek your father's God, and pray away the
cloud.

Go throng our ancient churches, and on the holy floor
Kneel humbly in your penitence among the kneeling
poor;
Cry out at morn and even, and amid the busy day,
'Spare, spare, O Lord, Thy people; — oh, cast us not
away!'

Hush down the sounds of quarrel; let party names
alone;
Let brother join with brother, and England claim her
own.
In battle with the Mammon-host join peasant, clerk
and lord:
Sweet charity your banner-flag, and GOD FOR ALL your
word.

SONNETS.

SONNETS.

I.

If thou wouldst find what holiest men have sought,
Communion with the power of Poesy,
Empty thy mind of all unquiet thought,
Lay bare thy spirit to the vaulting sky
And glory of the sunshine: go and stand
Where nodding briers sport with the water-break,
Or by the plashings of a moonlight creek, —
Or breast the wind upon some jutting land: —
The most unheeded things have influences
That sink into the soul; in after-hours
We oft are tempted suddenly to dress
The tombs of half-forgotten moods with flowers:
Our own choice mocks us; and the sweetest themes
Come to us without call, wayward as dreams.

II.

Weep ye and howl, for that ye did refuse
God's feast of bounties when most largely spread;—
Sunrise and set, and clustering overhead
The nightly stars — for that ye did not choose
To wait on Beauty, all content to lose
The portion of the Spirit's offered bread
With which the humble wise are daily fed,
That grows from yielding things despised their dues.
Therefore your solitary hours unblest
Shall not be peopled with the memories dear
Of field, and church-way path, and runnel clear:
Therefore your fading age shall not be drest
With fresh spring-flowers: because ye did belie
Your noblest life, in sorrow ye shall die.

III.

But deck the board — for hither comes a band
Of pure young spirits, fresh-arrayed in white,
Glistering against the newly risen light;
Over the green and dew-impearlèd land
Blithesomely tripping forward, hand in hand:
Deck ye the board — and let the guest be dight
In Gospel wedding-garment rich and bright,
And every bud that summer suns expand.
For you, ye humble ones, our thickets bloom:
Ye know the texture of each opening flower,
And which the sunshine, and which love the gloom.
The shrill of poisèd larks for many an hour
Ye watch; and all things gentle in your hearts
Have place, and play at call their tuneful parts.

IV.

Out, palsied soul, that dost but tremble ever
In sight of the bright sunshine ; — mine be joy,
And the full heart, and eye that faileth never
In the glad morning : — I am yet a boy ; —
I have not wandered from the crystal river
That flowed by me in childhood : my employ
Hath been to take the gift and praise the Giver ;
To love the flowers thy heedless steps destroy.
I wonder if the bliss that flows to me
In youth, shall be exhaled and scorched up dry
By the noonday glare of life ; I must not lie
For ever in the shade of childhood's tree ;
But I must venture forth and make advance
Along the toilèd path of human circumstance.

V.

My own dear country! thy remembrance comes
Like softly-flowing music on my heart;
With thy green sunny hills, and happy homes,
And cots rose-bowered, bosomed in dells apart:
The merry pealings of our village-bells
Gush ever and anon upon mine ear;
And is there not a far-off sound that tells
Of many-voicèd laughter shrill and clear?
Oh! were I now with thee — to sit and play
Under the hawthorn on the slope 'o th' hill,
As I was wont to do; or pluck all day
The cowslip and the flaunting daffodil,
Till shepherds whistled homeward, and the west
Folded the large sun in her crimson breast!

VI.

Oh, what doth it avail, in busy care
The summer of our days to pass away
In-doors — nor forth into the sunny ray,
Nor by the wood nor river-side to fare,
Nor on far-seeing hills to meet the air,
Nor watch the land-waves yean the shivering spray?
Oh, what doth it avail, though every day
Fresh-catered wealth its golden tribute bear?
Rather along the field-paths in the morn
To meet the first laugh of the twinkling east,
Or when the clear-eyed Aphrodite is born
Out from the amber ripples of the west,
'T is joy: — to move under the bended sky,
And smell the pleasant earth, and feel the winds go by.

VII.

Truth loveth not to lavish upon all
The clear down-shining of her heavenly smile;
She chooseth those on whom its light shall fall,
And shuts them from the earthly crowd the while:
But they whom she hath lightened tread this earth
With step and mien of heavenly gentleness;
Ye shall not see them drunk with over-mirth,
Or tangled in the world's thick wilderness;
For there hath shone upon their path of life
Mild beamings from a hidden glory's ray;
A calm hath passed upon their spirit's strife,
The bounding of young hopes hath sunk away,
And certain bliss hath dawned, with still uprise,
Like the deep rest of joy in spirits' Paradise.

VIII.

Come to me often, sportive Memory;
Thy hands are full of flowers; thy voice is sweet;
Thine innocent uncareful look doth meet
The solitary cravings of mine eye;
I cannot let thee flit unheeded by,
For I have gentle words wherewith to greet
Thy welcome visits; pleasant hours are fleet,
So let us sit and talk the sand-glass dry.
Dear visitant, who comest, dark and light,
Morning and evening, and with merry voice
Tellest of new occasion to rejoice;
And playest round me in the fairy night
Like a quaint spirit, on the moonlight beams
Threading the mazy labyrinth of dreams.

IX.

TO THE AUTHOR OF 'THE RECTORY OF VALEHEAD.'

THERE is a sweet well-spring of purity
In the holy heart, whereout unceasing flow
Its living waters, freshening as they go
The weary deserts of humanity:
There is a spirit in words, which doth express
Celestial converse and divine employ;
A surface of unbroken gentleness,
With an under-current of deep-running joy.
I closed thy holy book this Sabbath-morn;
And it hath spread like billow-calming oil
Upon my spirit, in the loud turmoil
Of ever-striving passions tempest-worn; —
Thy Master's peace be thine, even as thou hast
Over this soul a holy quiet cast.

X.

TO MARY.

On thy young brow, my sister, twenty years
Have shed their sunshine — and this April morn
Looks on thee fresh and gladsome, as new-born
From veiling clouds the king of day appears:
Thou scarce canst order back the thankful tears
That swell in thy blue eyes — nor dare to meet
The happy looks that never cease to greet
Thee, the dear nursling of our hopes and fears.
This Eastertide together we have read
How in the garden, when that weeping one
Asked sadly for her Lord of some unknown,
With look of sweet reproof He turned and said,
'Mary' —— Sweet sister, when thy need shall be,
That word, that look, so may He turn on thee!

XI.

TO THE SAME.

Cheeriest of maidens, who, with light of bliss
That waneth never in thy gladsome eye,
Passest all lightly earth's sad sorrows by,
Scarce crediting report of aught amiss
In the wide-wasted world; on thee the smile
Of heavenly peacefulness doth ever rest,
And thou art joying in a region blest,
With tempests raging round thee all the while.
So mayest thou ever be, if thou shalt keep
Unfailing communings with Him above;
And in thy sunshine-hours of wakeful love,
And the unchecked confidings of thy sleep,
With pure distilment be thy spirit fed
Of holiest influence, from His presence shed.

XII.

TO WILLIAM JACKSON OF EXETER.

Jackson, than whom none better skilled to lead
The willing spirit captive with sweet lays,
Searching the hidden fountain-heads which feed
Our love of beauty — thine be all the praise
Of tuning to our England's hills and dales
Responsive melodies, whose music dwells
Among the memories of early tales,
And far-off chime of unforgotten bells.
With thee, sick at the boastful ignorance
Of this dull age, that hath no heart for song,
My winter hours I spend, and lead along
My thought in playful or in solemn dance,
Whether the harp discourse of fields and swains,
Or meditate high praise in angel-strains.

XIII.

THE MENDIP HILLS OVER WELLS.

How grand beneath the feet that company
Of steep grey roofs and clustering pinnacles
Of the massy fane, brooding in majesty
Above the town that spreads among the dells!
Hark! the deep clock unrolls its voice of power;
And sweetly-mellowed sound of chiming bells
Calling to prayer from out the central tower
Over the thickly-timbered hollow dwells.
Meet worship-place for such a glorious stretch
Of sunny prospect — for these mighty hills,
And that dark solemn Tor,[1] and all that reach
Of bright-green meadows, laced with silver rills,
Bounded by ranges of pale blue, that rise
To where white strips of sea are traced upon the skies.

[1] Glastonbury Tor.

XIV.

GLASTONBURY.

On thy green marge, thou vale of Avalon,
Not for that thou art crowned with ancient towers
And shafts and clustered pillars many an one,
Love I to dream away the sunny hours;
Not for that here in charmèd slumber lie
The holy relics of that British king
Who was the flower of knightly chivalry,
Do I stand blest past power of uttering; —
But for that on thy cowslip-sprinkled sod
Alit of old the olive-bearing bird,
Meek messenger of purchased peace with God;
And the first hymns that Britain ever heard
Arose, the low preluding melodies
To the sweetest anthem that hath reached the skies.

XV.

SUNSET AT BURTON PYNSENT, SOMERSET.

How bare and bright thou sinkest to thy rest
Over the burnished line of the Severn-sea!
While somewhat of thy power thou buriest
In ruddy mists, that we may look on thee.
And while we stand and wonder, we may see
Far mountain-tops in visible glory drest,
Where 'twixt yon purple hills the sight is free
To search the regions of the dim north-west.
But shadowy bars have crossed thee — suddenly
Thou 'rt fallen among strange clouds; — yet not the less
Thy presence know we, by the radiancy
That doth thy shroud with golden fringes dress;
Even as hidden love to faithful eye
Brightens the edges of obscure distress.

XVI.

RECOLLECTION OF WORDSWORTH'S 'RUTH.'

HERE are the brows of Quantock, purple-clad
With lavish heath-bloom: there the banks of Tone.
Where is that woman love-forlorn and sad,
Piping her flute of hemlock all alone?
I hear the Quantock woodman whistling home —
The sunset flush is over Dunkery: —
I fear me much that she hath ceased to roam
Up the steep path, and lie beneath the tree.
I always fancied I should hear in sooth
That music — but it sounds not: — wayward tears
Are filling in mine eyes for thee, poor Ruth —
I had forgotten all the lapse of years
Since thy deep griefs were hallowed by the pen
Of that most pure of poesy-gifted men.

XVII.

AN EVENING IN AUTUMN, NEAR NETHER STOWEY, SOMERSET.

How soothing is that sound of far-off wheels
Under the golden sheen of the harvest-moon!
In the shade-chequered road it half reveals
A homeward-wending group, with hearts in tune
To thankful merriment; — father and boy,
And maiden with her gleanings on her head;
And the last wagon's rumble heard with joy
In the kitchen with the ending-supper spread.
But while I listening stand, the sound hath ceased;
And hark, from many voices lustily
The harvest-home, the prelude to the feast,
In measured bursts is pealing loud and high;
Soon all is still again beneath the bright
Full moon, that guides me home this autumn night.

XVIII.

CULBONE,[1] OR KITNORE, SOMERSET.

Half way upon the cliff I musing stood
O'er thy sea-fronting hollow, while the smoke
Curled from thy cottage chimneys through the wood
And brooded on the steeps of glooming oak;
Under a dark green buttress of the hill
Looked out thy lowly house of Sabbath prayer;
The sea was calm below: only thy rill
Talked to itself upon the quiet air.
Yet in this quaint and sportive-seeming dell
Hath, through the silent ages that are gone,
A stream of human things been passing on,
Whose unrecorded story none may tell,
Nor count the troths in that low chancel given,
And souls from yonder cabin fled to heaven.

[1] Culbone is a small village, embowered in lofty wooded hills on the coast between Porlock and Linton. For three months in winter its inhabitants are unvisited by the sun.

XIX.

LINN-CLEEVE, LINTON, DEVON.

This onward-deepening gloom — this hanging path
Over the Linn that soundeth mightily,
Foaming and tumbling on, as if in wrath
That aught should bar its passage to the sea,
These sundered walls of rock, tier upon tier
Built darkly up into the very sky,
Hung with thick woods, the native haunt of deer
And sheep that browse the dizzy slopes on high —
All half-unreal to my fancy seem, —
For opposite my crib, long years ago,
Were pictured just such rocks, just such a stream,
With just this height above, and depth below;
Even this jutting crag I seem to know —
As when some sight calls back a half-forgotten dream.

XX.

WATERS-MEET, LINN, DEVON.

(Recollection of Homer.)

Even thus, methinks, in some Ionian isle,
Yielding his soul to unrecorded joy,
Beside a fall like this, lingered awhile
On briery banks that wondrous minstrel-boy;
Long hours there came upon his vacant ear
The rushing of the river, till strange dreams
Fell on him, and his youthful spirit clear
Was dwelt on by the power of voiceful streams.
Thenceforth begun to grow upon his soul
The sound and force of waters; and he fed
His joy at many an ancient river's head,
And echoing caves, and thunder, and the roll
Of the wakeful ocean, — till the day when he
Poured forth that stream divine of mighty melody.

XXI.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF E. S., WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 3, 1832.

(Written at Worthy Farm, near Porlock, Somerset.)

THIS side the brow of yon sea-bounding hill
There is an alley overarched with green,
Where thick-grown briers entwine themselves at will;
There, twinkling through the under-flowers, is seen
The ever-shaking ocean far below:
And on the upper side, a rocky wall
Where deepest mosses and lithe ivies grow,
And honeysuckle-blooms in clusters fall.
There walked I when I last remembered thee;
And all too joyfully came o'er my mind
Moments of pleasure by the southern sea,
By our young lives two summers left behind;
Ah, sad-sweet memory — for that very day
The gloom came on which may not pass away.

XXII.

THE DYING BED.

(This and the five following sonnets were suggested by the death of —— ——, a young mother.)

Blest be the taper which hath power to shed
Light on the features of that angel-face;
Blest be the sadness of this solemn place;
Blest be the circle round that parting bed,
Whence many days all earthly hope hath fled;
And the spirit which hath well-nigh reached by grace
The rest of toil, the guerdon of its race,
Faint, but with hidden manna gently fed.
Oft have ye tended with unwearied care
This couch of hers in anxious time of birth:
Your meed of love, her mother-joys to share;
Now hers the joy, and ye are left to mourn:
For all your care can never keep on earth
The glorious child that shall to-night be born.

XXIII.

THE DEATH-CHAMBER.

Still as a moonlight ruin is thy form,
Or meekness of carved marble, that hath prayed
For ages on a tomb; serenely laid
As some fair vessel that hath braved the storm
And past into her haven, when the noise
That cheered her home hath all to silence died,
Her crew have shoreward parted, and no voice
Troubles her sleeping image in the tide.
Sister and saint, thou art a closed book,
Whose holy printing none may yet reveal;
A few days thou art granted us to look
On thy clasped binding, till that One unseal,
The Lamb, alone found worthy, and above
Thou teach sweet lessons to the kings of love.

XXIV.

THE SAME.[1]

Long we have mourned; but now the worst hath come,
We cannot weep, nor feel as we have felt
For aught in sorrow: thou art all too calm
And solemn-silent on thy bed of death; —
And that white sunken face hath never a sign
To make of aught disquieted within.
'T is a most awful thing, that face of thine
Seared with the traces which the soul hath left, —
The settlement from all the stir of life,
The fixed conclusion of all modes of thought,
The final impress of all joys and cares: —
We dare not whisper when we look on thee;
We scarce can breathe our breath when thou art by;
Dread image of the majesty of man!

[1] This is not properly a sonnet; but the expression of the thought seemed to be so sonnet-like, that it is here inserted.

XXV.

THE FUNERAL.

Slowly and softly let the music go,
As ye wind upwards to the grey church-tower;
Check the shrill hautboy, let the pipe breathe low —
Tread lightly on the pathside daisy-flower.
For she ye carry was a gentle bud,
Loved by the unsunned drops of silver dew;
Her voice was like the whisper of the wood
In prime of even, when the stars are few.
Lay her all gently in the sacred mould,
Weep with her one brief hour; then turn away, —
Go to hope's prison, — and from out the cold
And solitary gratings many a day
Look forth: 't is said the world is growing old,
And streaks of orient light in Time's horizon play.

XXVI.

The Funeral Sermon was on the text, 'The Master is come, and calleth for thee.' — *St. John* xi. 28.

Rise, said the Master, come unto the feast: —
She heard the call, and rose with willing feet;
But thinking it not otherwise than meet
For such a bidding to put on her best,
She is gone from us for a few short hours
Into her bridal-closet, there to wait
For the unfolding of the palace-gate,
That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
We have not seen her yet, though we have been
Full often to her chamber-door, and oft
Have listened underneath the postern green,
And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and soft;
But she hath made no answer, and the day
From the clear west is fading fast away.

XXVII.

HEU QUANTO MINUS EST CUM RELIQUIS VERSARI, QUAM TUI MEMINISSE!

The sweetest flower that ever saw the light,
The smoothest stream that ever wandered by,
The fairest star upon the brow of night,
Joying and sparkling from his sphere on high,
The softest glances of the stockdove's eye,
The lily pure, the mary-bud gold-bright,
The gush of song that floodeth all the sky
From the dear flutterer mounted out of sight, —
Are not so pleasure-stirring to the thought,
Not to the wounded soul so full of balm,
As one frail glimpse, by painful straining caught
Along the past's deep mist-enfolded calm,
Of that sweet face, not visibly defined,
But rising clearly on the inner mind.

XXVIII.

Oh! when shall this frail tenement of clay
Be emptied by Death's peremptory call,
And its celestial guest be fetched away
From mortal tenure and corporeal thrall —
A beam, to mingle with the flood of day,
A part to join unto the glorious All?
When shall the kingly Intellect have fled
From this his dull material servitude,
And Thought exalt her long-abased head,
With pomp of heavenly majesty endued?
And when shall the Affection, here below
Broken by parting in its stream of light,
Dash off the earthly vestiture of woe,
And shine, with everlasting radiance bright?

XXIX.

All things are dying round us; days and hours,
A multitudinous troop, are passing on;
Winter is fled, and spring hath shed her flowers,
And summer's sun was shining, and hath shone;
Autumn was with us, but his work is done;
They all have flitted by, as doth a dream;
And we are verging onward. 'T is not so:
We name reality but as things seem,
And truth is hidden from our eyes below.
We live but in the dimness of a sleep:
Soon shall the veil be rent from certainty,
The spell of time be loosed from us, and we
Pass out from this incurved and fretful stream
Into the bosom of the tranquil deep.

XXX.

ON SEEING OUR FAMILY-VAULT.

This lodging is well chosen: — for 't is near
The fitful sighing of those chestnut-trees;
And every Sabbath morning it can hear
The swelling of the hymnèd melodies;
And the low booming of the funeral bell
Shall murmur through the dark and vaulted room,
Waking its solemn echoes but to tell
That one more soul is gathered to its home.
There we shall lie beneath the trodden stone: —
Oh, none can tell how dreamless and how deep
Our peace will be, when the last earth is thrown,
The last notes of the music fallen asleep,
The mourners past away, the tolling done,
The last chink closed, and the long dark begun.

XXXI.

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Could I for once be so in love with gloom
As to leave off with cold mortality —
To finish with the deep peace of the tomb,
And the sealed darkness of the withering eye?
And could I look on thee, thou calm retreat,
And never once think of the joyous morn,
Which, bursting through the dark, our eyes shall greet
With heavenly sunshine on the instant born?
O glorious time! then may we wake at length,
After life's tempest, under a clear sky,
And count our band, and find, with keenest joy,
None wanting — love preserved in all its strength;
And, with fresh beauty, hand in hand arise,
A link in the bright chain of ransomed families.

XXXII.

ON HEARING THAT IT IS SUPPOSED, FROM ASTRONOMICAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE WORLD IS YET IN ITS INFANCY.

So then the lessons of all-teaching Time
Shall not be fruitless; but the sons of men
Will live to ripen into age, and ken
The hidden laws of God — the doubts and fears
That flit around us, when the light appears,
Shall cease to haunt us; and young Truth, by then
Vigorous for good, shall take his power and reign,
Nursed in the discipline of human tears.
Oh, might I live when, from this stir of things
That fills our days, some new and mighty birth
Of purest mind hath risen upon the earth;
Or when my spirit folds her weary wing
Where no storm comes, watching with calm delight,
On human beauty feed my angel-sight!

XXXIII.

Before the day the gleaming dawn doth flee:—
All yester-night I had a dreary dream:
Methought I walked in desert Academe
Among fallen pillars — and there came to me
All in a dim half-twilight silently
A very sad old man — his eyes were red
With over-weeping — and he cried and said,
'The light hath risen, but shineth not on me.'
Beautiful Athens, all thy loveliness
Is like the scarce-remembered burst of spring
When now the summer in her party-dress
Hath clothed the woods, and filled each living thing
With ripest joy — because upon our time
Hath risen the noon, and thou wert in the prime.

XXXIV.

SUGGESTED BY THE OPENING OF THE ŒDIPUS COLONEUS OF SOPHOCLES.

Colonos! can it be that thou hast still
Thy laurel and thine olive and thy vine?
Do thy close-feathered nightingales yet trill
Their warbles of thick-sobbing song divine?
Does the gold sheen of the crocus o'er thee shine
And dew-fed clusters of the daffodil,
And round thy flowery knots Cephisus twine,
Aye oozing up with many a bubbling rill?
Oh, might I stand beside thy leafy knoll,
In sight of the far-off city-towers, and see
The faithful-hearted pure Antigone
Toward the dread precinct, leading sad and slow
That awful temple of a kingly soul,
Lifted to heaven by unexampled woe!

XXXV.

'T WERE better far from noon to eventide
To sit and feel sad care, and fence the while
The patient spirit for unwonted toil,
Than in the calm for ever to abide;
'T were better far to climb the mountain-side
Through perilous buffeting of wind and steep,
Than in the valley-nook, charmed into sleep,
All the fair blossoms of young life to hide.
So let me labor — for 'tis labor-worth
To feel the fruits of my seed-time of tears
Shedding their fragrance over half this earth;
No mother rues the sharpest pangs of birth,
So she may see the offspring of her fears
Standing in high estate and manly years.

XXXVI.

THE GIPSY GIRL.

Passing I saw her as she stood beside
A lonely stream between two barren wolds;
Her loose vest hung in rudely-gathered folds
On her swart bosom, which in maiden pride
Pillowed a string of pearls; among her hair
Twined the light bluebell and the stonecrop gay;
And not far thence the small encampment lay,
Curling its wreathèd smoke into the air.
She seemed a child of some sun-favored clime;
So still, so habited to warmth and rest;
And in my wayward musings on past time,
When my thought fills with treasured memories,
That image nearest borders on the blest
Creations of pure art that never dies.

XXXVII.

TO WINTER. WRITTEN AT AMPTON, SUFFOLK.

Welcome, stern Winter, though thy brows are bound
With no fresh flowers, and ditties none thou hast
But the wild music of the sweeping blast;
Welcome this chilly wind that snatches round
The brown leaves in quaint eddies; we have long
Panted in wearying heat; skies always bright,
And dull return of never-clouded light,
Sort not with hearts that gather food for song.
Rather, dear Winter, I would forth with thee,
Watching thee disattire the earth; and roam
On the bleak heaths that stretch about my home,
Till round the flat horizon I can see
The purple frost-belt: then to fireside-chair,
And sweetest labor of poetic care.

XXXVIII.

EPIPHANY.[1]

As some great actor, when the rhythmic strain
Of music, and the step of even dance,
Hath ceased, in conscious pride is seen advance,
Fixing the wandering looks of all again;
On whom the choric band, in comely train,
Wait ever, duly with responsive parts
Timing his measured passion, but all hearts
He hath in hand, to mould to pity or pain; —
So in the scenic skies that wondrous Star
Came forth — the myriads that spectators are
Of heavenly acts, baffled their lights in gloom
To give the great Protagonist his way;
And the drama opened, that nor night nor day
Shall see consummate till the final doom.

[1] 'How was Christ manifested to the world? A star shone in heaven above all other stars; and its novelty struck terror. All the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, were chorus to this star; and it sent forth its light above all.' St. Ignatius, *Epistle to Ephesians*, § 19.

XXXIX.

TO THE WOOD-PIGEON. WRITTEN IN PASSION-WEEK.

Tell me, thou mild and melancholy bird,
Whence learnedst thou that meditative voice?
For all the forest-passages rejoice,
And not a note of sorrow now is heard:
I would know more — how is it I preferred
To leave the station of my morning choice,
Where, with her sudden startle of shrill noise,
The budding thorn-bush brake the blackbird stirred?
Sweet mourner, who, in time of fullest glee,
Risest to uttering but so sad a strain,
And in the bleak winds, when they ruffle thee,
Keepest thee still, and never dost complain;
I love thee — for thy note to memory brings
This sorrowing in the midst of happiest things.

XL.

EASTER-EVE.

I saw two women weeping by the tomb
Of one new-buried, in a fair green place
Bowered with shrubs; the eve retained no trace
Of aught that day performed, but the faint gloom
Of dying day was spread upon the sky;
The moon was broad and bright above the wood;
The breeze brought tokens of a multitude,
Music, and shout, and mingled revelry.
At length came gleaming through the thicket-shade
Helmet and casque, and a steel-armed band
Watched round the sepulchre in solemn stand;
The night-word past, from man to man conveyed;
And I could see those women rise and go
Under the dark trees, moving sad and slow.

XLI.

IN LAUDEM S. EULALIÆ V. ET M.

YOUNG budding virgin, who in bashful pride,
All dedicate to Christ, didst stand apart
From crowds of pitying faithless, and with heart
Unmoved didst count the iron talons gride
Their purple furrows in thy tender side;
Beautiful is thy story — full of food
For youthful souls that need be gently wooed:
Few have confessed so young, so sweetly died.
Forth with thine ebbing breath was seen to fly
A milk-white dove to heaven, an emblem meet
Of undefiled baptismal purity;
And dead upon the inhospitable street,
With gently floating flakes the piteous sky
Snow-clad thy girlish limbs, as with a funeral sheet.

XLII.

Saviour and Lord beloved, what homage new
Shall thy Church give thee in these latter days,
When there is nothing new — no song of praise
That ages have not sung, nor worship due
That hath not long been paid? Faithful and true
Our hearts are beating to thee: can we raise
No monument for victories of grace?
Must all our efforts be so poor and few?
O vain and earthly wish, that would be great
In over-serving! rather may we lie
In meekest self-devotion at thy feet,
And watch the quiet hours as they pass by,
Content and thankful for occasion shown
To make old service and old faith our own.

XLIII.

THE MALVERN HILLS, MARCH 12, 1835.

EREWHILE I saw ye faintly through far haze,
Spread many miles above the fields of sea;
Now ye rise glorious, and my steps are free
To wander through your valleys' beaten ways,
And climb above, threading the rocky maze;
And trace this stream alive with shifting light,
With whose successive eddies silver-bright
Not without pleasant sound the moonbeam plays.
My dear dear bride, two days had made thee mine,
Two days of waxing hope and waning fear,
When under the night-planet's lavish shine
We stood in joy, and blessed that rillet clear;
Such joy unwarning comes and quickly parts,
But lives deep-rooted in our 'heart of hearts.'

XLIV.

WRITTEN IN AN INTERVAL OF MELANCHOLY FOREBODING RESPECTING THE CHURCH.

Herbert and Crashaw, and that other name
Now dear as those, of him beneath whose eye
Arose[1] 'the second Temple's' honored frame,
After a carnal dark captivity,—
These are remembrances of promise high,
That set our smouldering energies on flame
To dare for our mother, and, if need, to die,
Sooner than blot her reverend cheek with shame.
O England, England! there hath twined among
The woof of all thy gloomiest destinies
A golden thread: a sound of sweetest song
Hath cheered thee under sad and threatening skies;
But thou hast revelled in the calm too long,
And waxest all unmindful where thy safety lies.

[1] See the conclusion of 'The Rectory of Valehead;' also, that of the Sermon 'On the Fortunes of the Church' in 'The Church of God, a series of Sermons,' by the Rev. R. W. Evans.

XLV.

When I behold thee, only living one
In whom God's image pure and clear I see,
Far beyond all in humble sanctity,
Close at my side, attending me alone;
Strange questioning it raises, wherefore thine
Should be the subject life, and not the free;
Heavenly, but bound in earthly chains to me;
Superior, yet dependent; God's, yet mine.
I therefore have been taught to feel at length
That not most precious in the Eternal's sight
Self-guiding freedom is, knowledge, or strength,
Or power of song, or wit's deceiving light;
But yielding meekness, careless to be free,
And the clear flame of love in chastity.

XLVI.

Each morn the same sun rises on our day,
Measuring with every year his usual round;
The merry bells that for our birthdays sound,
And those that knoll us to our homes of clay,
Speak ever with one voice; the skies obey
Spring whispering soft, and summer blossom-crowned,
And autumn flush, and winter icy-bound:
Down Life's smooth channel Ages sleep their way.
The babe that smiling in her slumber lies
Lapt in thy breast, hath been there oft before;
This day, this room, hath all been acted o'er;
And even the thought not first in me doth rise; —
Time measures but the course of human will;
'T is we that move, while Providence is still.

XLVII.[1]

THERE is a bright space in yon rolling cloud
Betokening the presence of the moon; —
Into the pure sky she will travel soon,
In clearest beauty, free from envious shroud.
Even so to thee, my soul's sweet partner, bowed
With pain severe, the light of hope was shown;
And thou art now in æther of thine own,
A clear blue space, with perfect calm endowed;
And this young babe, a treasure newly found,
Like some fair star attendant at thy side,
Shall journey on, through ease and peril tried:
To him, whose being in your own is bound,
For blest example and high solace given, —
Heaven at life's end, and life itself a heaven.

[1] This and the following sonnet were written about the time of the birth of my first child.

XLVIII.

Sleep, gentle love! and let the soothing dew
Of deepest quiet cover every sense;
Calm visions rise before thine inward view,
And restless fears and doubts be banished thence;
And may the ministering hand of Providence
At every breathing give thee vigor new,
Thy gathering health from chill and danger fence,
And mantle fresh thy cheeks with beautiful hue.
And I, from whom the pangs of sudden pain
Lately my dearest treasure well-nigh reft,
Now safely sped, and, breathing free again,
Have not enough of thankful offerings left
To pay my vows to God; rather with prayer
I weary Him afresh, to make thy life His care.

XLIX.[1]

Long have we toiled, and passed from day to day
Our stated round of duties, till the mind
Reaches for change, and longs fresh paths to find
From her accustomed dwelling far away:
Come, then, dear wife, while yet the summer ray
Fills all the air with gladness, and unbind
Awhile the chains of duty; then reclined
Where Derwent or where Dove in varied play
Leaps through his mossy rocks, let us entice
The wary trout, or ply the pencil's art;
Or in some wooded dell that lies apart
Woo the maid Poesy: no unworthy price
Of year-long labor without ceasing wrought,
And intermission of poetic thought.

[1] This and the four following sonnets were written in anticipation of, or during, a summer month spent in the Peak of Derbyshire, 1836.

L.

TO THE RIVER WYE.

If, gentle stream, by promised sacrifice
Of kid or yearling, or by scattered flowers
Of votive roses culled from thy thick bowers,
Or golden cistus, we could thee entice
To be propitious to our love, no price
Should save these errant flocks; each nook but ours
Should shed its eglantine in twinkling showers,
For tribute from thy wooded paradise.
But not thy flocks, nor brier-roses hung
In natural garlands down thy rocky hills,
Shall win thee to be ours; more precious far
Than summer blossoms or rich offerings are,
We bring thee sweet poetic descants, sung
To the wild music of thy tinkling rills.

LI.

Close is the nook; the valley-pathway steep
Above the river climbs; and down the bank,
With sweet wild roses and thick hazels rank,
By an unheeded track your feet may creep
Into a shady covert still and deep,
Harbor of flowery fragrance; with full tide
The river slumbers by; on either side
Over their rocks the merry runnels leap.
Here, in the freshness of each sunny morn,
Sit we in raptured converse; every flower
Opens to greet us in our trellised bower,
With warm dew sparkling; moss with hair unshorn
Is our soft pavement; and the social throng
Unscared, around us pour their airy song.

LII.

TO THE YELLOW CISTUS.

Flower, that with thy silken tapestry
Of flexile petals interwove with green,
Clothest the mountain walls of this calm scene;
We, a love-led poetic company,
Pronounce thee happy; if happiness it be
In every cleft the bright grey rocks between
To plant thy seemly gems, and reign the queen
Of path-side blossoms over wood and lea.
Live, and of those poor fools who idly moan
Thy fragile lifetime's shortness, reck not aught;
Thou diest not, when thy ripe blossoms are strown
On the damp earth, or by the tempest caught;
Thou hast a future life to them unknown —
In the eternity of human thought.

LIII.

HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE, JULY, 1836.

Not fond displays of cost, nor pampered train
Of idle menials, me so much delight,
Nor mirrored halls, nor roofs with gilding bright,
Nor all the foolery of the rich and vain,
As these time-honored walls, crowning the plain
With their grey battlements; within bedight
With ancient trophies of baronial might,
And figures dim, inwoven in the grain
Of dusky tapestry. I love to muse
In present peace, on days of pomp and strife;
The daily struggles of our human life,
Seen through Time's veil, their selfish coloring lose:
As here the glaring beams of outer day
Through ivy-shadowed oriels softened play.

LIV.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, JANUARY, 1837.

We stood upon the tomb of him whose praise
Time, nor oblivious thrift, nor envy chill,
Nor war, nor ocean with her severing space,
Shall hinder from the peopled world to fill;
And thus, in fulness of our heart, we cried:
God's works are wonderful — the circling sky,
The rivers that with noiseless footing glide,
Man's firm-built strength, and woman's liquid eye;
But the high spirit that sleepeth here below,
More than all beautiful and stately things,
Glory to God the mighty Maker brings;
To whom alone 't was given the bounds to know
Of human action, and the secret springs
Whence the deep streams of joy and sorrow flow.

LV.

ST. ROBERT'S CAVE, KNARESBOROUGH.[1]

We gazed intent upon the murderous cave;
Too fair a place, methinks, for deeds of blood.
Above, the rocks, dappled with pendent wood,
Rose sheltering: and below with rippling wave
The crystal Nidd flowed by. The wondrous tale
That from of old had turned our young cheeks pale,
Came crowding on the present; yonder stood
The guilt-worn student, skilled without avail
In ancient lore; and yonder seemed to lie
The melancholy corse, year after year
Sending to Heaven its silent vengeance-cry,
Till Aram's hour was come, and He, whose ear
Was open, tracked the murderer where he fled,
And wrath's right-aiming stroke descended on his head.

[1] The scene of the murder of Daniel Clarke by Eugene Aram.

LVI.

WRITTEN AT YORK ON THE DAY OF THE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA, JUNE 28, 1838.

Shine out, thou Sun, and let the minster-towers
Pour forth their solemn music, and the crowd
Utter their oft-repeated shouts and loud;
Let little children bless the gladsome hours
Of this auspicious day; for there are powers
Undreamt of by the selfish and the proud,
That work when Avarice in the dust is bowed,
And mean Utility. The summer flowers
That toil not neither spin, the deep-blue sky,
The ever-twinkling waves that gird our land,
Have taught ye to rejoice: therefore pass by,
Ye colored pageants; — shout, each girl and boy: —
Ill fare the heart that doth not feel your joy!

LVII.

SUMMIT OF SKIDDAW, JULY 7, 1838.

At length here stand we, wrapt as in the cloud
In which light dwelt before the sun was born,
When the great fiat issued, in the morn
Of this fair world; alone and in a shroud
Of dazzling mist, while the wind whistling loud
Buffets thy streaming locks: — result forlorn
For us who up yon steep our way have worn,
Elate with hope, and of our daring proud.
Yet though no stretch of glorious prospect range
Beneath our vision, — neither Scottish coast
Nor ocean-island, nor the future boast
Of far-off hills descried, — I would not change
For aught on earth this solitary hour
Of Nature's grandest and most sacred power.

LVIII.

DESCENT OF THE SAME.

Glory on glory greets our wondering sight
As we wind down these slopes; mountain and plain
Robed in rich sunshine, and the distant main
Lacing the sky with silver; and yon height,
So lately left in clouds, distinct and bright.
Anon the mist enwraps us; then again
Burst into view lakes, pastures, fields of grain,
And rocky passes, with their torrents white.
So on the head, perchance, and highest bent
Of thine endeavor, Heaven may stint the dower
Of rich reward long hoped; but thine ascent
Was full of pleasures, — and the teaching hour
Of disappointment hath a kindly voice,
That moves the spirit inly to rejoice.

LIX.

WRITTEN AT AMPTON, SUFFOLK, JANUARY, 1838.

Once more I stray among this wilderness
Of ancient trees, and through the rustling fern,
Golden and sere, brush forward; at each turn
Meeting fresh avenues in winter dress
Of long grey moss, or yellow lichen bright;
While the long lines of intercepted shade,
Spread into distance through the turfy glade,
Chequered with rosy paths of evening light.
Here first I learned to tune my youthful thoughts
To themes of blessed import: woods and sky,
And waters, as they rushed or slumbered by,
For my poetic soul refreshment brought;
And now within me rise, unbidden long,
Fresh springs of life — fresh themes of earnest song.

LX.

WYMESWOLD, APRIL, 1837.

Dear streamlet, tripping down thy devious course,
Or lulled in smoothest pools of sombre hue,
Or breaking over stones with murmurs hoarse,
To thee one grateful strain is surely due
From me, the poet of thy native wolds,
Now that the sky is golden in the west,
And distant flocks are bleating from their folds,
And the pale eve-star lifts her sparkling crest.
Would it were thus with thee, when summer suns
Shed their strong heats, and over field and hill
Swims the faint air, and all the cattle shuns
The brighter slopes; but then thy scanty rill
Has dwindled to a thread, and, creeping through
The tangled herbage, shelters from the view.

LXI.

THE SAME.

Nor is a thankful strain from me not due
To you, ye company of cherished flowers,
That look upon, throughout the weary hours,
My study and my prison; for from you
I learn that Nature to her charge is true;
That she, who clothes with bloom your lavish bowers
In kindlier climates, can, in skies like ours,
Paint your soft petals with their native hue.
And thence I learn that this poetic soul,
That fain would revel in the warmth and light
Of heavenly beauty, yet in strict control
Dwelling, and chilly realms of damp and blight,
Must not the more its proper task forego;
But in the dreariest clime its blossoms show.

LXII.

OFF OSTENDE,[1] JUNE 11, 1837.

But now the level sea-horizon spanned
With its unbroken line the azure round:
I look again, and see the waters crowned
With a pale coronet of distant land;
A shore by us untrodden and unknown,
Thronged with strange men, and voices' stranger sound;
Where we shall wander long, and none be found
To greet with kind salutes and call our own.
Yet even thus, with thee, wife of my love,
Enough the world is peopled; one fond heart
Resting on mine, with others I can part,
Prizing thy gentle excellence above
All native comfort; and, on land or sea,
Then best befriended if alone with thee.

[1] The following sonnets are reminiscences of a tour on the Continent in July, 1837.

LXIII.

BRUGES.

Wouldst thou behold, not the ensnaring blaze
Of earthly grandeur in its envious noon,
But the calm majesty of other days
Reposing, as beneath the summer moon
Rests the laid Ocean — hie thee to the streets
Of ancient Bruges: — temple, dome, and tower,
Or pathside dwelling, — whatsoever meets
Thy roving sight, bears record of a power
Long since departed: surely not so fair
When pomp and pride were tenants here, as now,
When solitary forms, with pious care,
Or thankful haply for some granted vow,
Stately and dark these vistas churchward tread,
Fit habitants for her whose fame is with the dead.

LXIV.

WRITTEN AT GHENT.

Alas for England, if her native hearts
Were only to be won by stately towers,
Or oft-recurring chime of many parts,
With lively music cheating the dull hours;
If only beauteous fields or lavish flowers
Would win and keep the children whom she bears!
Not that we lack of these, but there are ours
More healing medicines for our daily cares: —
Nations have fought against the fanes they raised;
For gold have bartered pomp: but where the law
Builds on men's hearts, — no longer vainly praised,
But with a settled and deep-rooted awe
It takes possession of its children's love,
And reigns, fit emblem of its source above.

LXV.

ANTWERP CATHEDRAL.

Be it not mine in these high aisles to tread
Lightly, with scornful or with pitying gaze,
Viewing these worshippers, who on the days
When English fanes are silent as the dead,
Throng kneeling, where yon feeble candles shed
Their flickering light: far rather would I raise
My hands in prayer with them, or join in praise,
Or sit beneath their shrines in humble dread.
Because our being's end is furthered best
Not by the pride of reason, most unjust
When it condemneth, — but by self-distrust,
By mildness, and submission, and arrest
Of sudden judgment: thus we learn to feel
That all are one, and have one wound to heal.

LXVI.

BRUSSELS.

The peaceful moon sheds downward from the sky
Upon the sleeping city her soft light;
Lines of storm-laden vapor heavily
From the low north advance upon the night;
The minster-towers are seen in vision bright
In front, distinct with fretted tracery;
And long glades stretch beneath this giddy height,
Dappled with shadows dark of tower and tree.
Such wert thou, Brussels, when I gazed on thee;
Thou, at whose name the circumstance of war
Rose to my youthful fancy; now no more
A sound to move to tears; to memory
Henceforth, as ever unto freedom, dear,
In virtue of this night so soft and clear.

LXVII.

WATERLOO.

They stood upon these plains, and side by side
Did battle for the world, too long enthralled
To the universal tyrant; one was called,
And one was left to cross the homeward tide;
Both in their glory, as in arms, allied:
But the loud voice of fame is hushed asleep,
Their sires are gone, no more their widows weep,
Their orphan sons forget them in their pride.
Yet deem not that they sold their lives for nought:
Who, that hath springing in his breast the fount
Of self-devoting love, the cost would count,
So might he in those favored ranks have fought,
Increasing by his single strength's amount
That blessed victory for freedom wrought?

LXVIII.

WRITTEN AT FRANKFORT.

No voice is heard along the city-street
Of men, nor tramp of horse; but the night long
Yon nightingale fills all the air with song.
I am a stranger here, but no less sweet
Those heavenly notes my raptured hearing greet,
Than when I stood my native dales among,
And the sweet blossom of the hawthorn flung
Its incense on my path, and at my feet
The glow-worm glistened. Bird of restless joy!
When first I learned to love this peopled earth,
I past beside thy haunts, a roving boy,
And thou wert mingled in my spirit's mirth;
But now I am spell-fastened by thy strain,
And oft return to listen once again.

LXIX.

TO ALICE IN ENGLAND. ALSO WRITTEN AT FRANKFORT.

Child of our love, thou sleepest softly now
In our dear home perchance, with thine own smile
Resting upon thy rosy lips, the while
Thy little arm is folded on thy brow,
And thou art dreaming of the summer flowers
Shown thee this sunny morn. Blest be thy sleep!
Good angels round thy bed their watches keep
In holy station through the silent hours.
Thus we commit thee to the wakeful care
Of Him whose mercy gave thee; thus secure
We leave thee in the confidence of prayer,
Of thy best welfare and his blessing sure;
Near, though to these our earthly eyes unseen;
With us, though half the ocean rolls between.

LXX.

MILAN CATHEDRAL.

Here stand, beloved, where the outer light
Falls, glorified by entrance to the shrine
Of the Eternal; where the tracery fine
Of marble shafts springs upward beyond sight;
And hear the soaring chant in unison
Of manly voices, as by angel-bands
Sent up to God — or see with spreading hands
The fathers shout their ancient benison.
Shun not the full outpouring of thy soul;
Claim not exemption for thy judgment's sake:
He, who will not divided service take,
Loves more the heart of man when offered whole,
Though by unlearned simplicity of fools,
Than all the wrangling of polemic schools.

Pictorial Emblems for the Seasons.

LXXI.

WINTER, DREAR AND CHILL, BUT WITHAL MERRY AND FREE.

Had I the wondrous magic to invest
Ideal forms in color, I would paint
Thee, Winter, first, by an age-withered saint
Deep in his beads: on his bare ribs should rest
A cross of lichen'd boughs; and duly prest
Each morn by horny knees, one for each bone,
There should be two round hollows in the stone,
Whither his bent limbs should be half addrest.
And in the entry of the holy cave
Where the same saint should sit, a laughing boy,
Naked, and all aglow with play and joy,
Should peer full slily on that father grave,
In the full blessedness of childhood's morn,
And laugh his crusty solitude to scorn.

LXXII.

SPRING, WHEN YOUNG FLOWERS PEEP, BUT THE FROST NIPPETH KEEN.

Spring should be drest in emblem quaint and shy;
A troop of rosy girls escaped from bed
For very wantonness of play, should tread
The garden-paths; one tucks her night-robe high,
The dewy freshness of the lawn to try;
Some have been bolder, and unclothed and bright
The group is seen in the moon's mellow light;
Some, scattered, gaze upon the trees and sky.
But there should be that turn with hurried glance
Beckoning their playmates, where by a side-path
Between the shrubs is seen to half-advance
The moody widow lodger; who in wrath
Is sure to scatter all their stealthy play,
And they will rue it ere the break of day.

LXXIII.

SUMMER, WHEN THE PRIME IS REACHED, BUT THERE ARE TOKENS OF DECAY.

For Summer I would paint a married pair
Sitting in close embraces, while a band
Of children kneel before them hand in hand;
Healthful their cheeks, and from their mantling hair,
Well-knit and clear, their downward limbs are bare;
His hand is past over her neck, and prest
In pride of love upon her full ripe breast;
And yet his brow is delved with lines of care,
And in her shining eye one truant tear
Stands, ready to be shed: — a quiet scene,
But not without perchance intruding fear
That never comes again what once hath been;
And recollection that our fondest toil
But weaves a texture for the world to soil.

LXXIV.

AUTUMN, WHOSE FRUITS ENDURE, THOUGH DEATH IS ON IT.

Autumn should be a youth wasted and wan,
A flush upon his cheek, and in his eye
Unhealthful fire; and there should sit hard by
She that best loves him, ever and anon
Wistfully looking, and for pleasures gone
(So would I paint her) she should seem to sigh;
The while some slender task her fingers ply,
Veiling the dread that trusts him not alone.
But he, high-rapt in divine poesy,
Unrolls the treasures of creative art,
Spells framing for the world's unheeding heart;
His very eye should speak, and you should see
That love will brighten as his frame decays,
And song not fail but with his failing days.

LXXV.

EPIMENIDES.

He went into the woods a laughing boy;
Each flower was in his heart; the happy bird
Flitting across the morning sun, or heard
From way-side thicket, was to him a joy:
The water-springs, that in their moist employ
Leapt from their banks, with many an inward word
Spoke to his soul, and every leaf that stirred
Found notice from his quickly-glancing eye.
There wondrous sleep fell on him: many a year
His lids were closed: youth left him, and he woke
A careful noter of men's ways; of clear
And lofty spirit: sages, when he spoke,
Forgot their systems; and the worldly-wise
Shrunk from the gaze of truth with baffled eyes.

LXXVI.

ARION.

Not song, nor beauty, nor the wondrous power
Of the clear sky, nor stream, nor mountain glen,
Nor the wide Ocean, turn the hearts of men
To love, nor give the world-embracing dower
Of inward gentleness: — up from the bed
Blest by chaste beauty, men have risen to blood,
And life hath perished in the flowery wood,
And the poor traveller beneath starlight bled.
Thus that musician, in his wealth of song
Pouring his numbers, even with the sound
Swimming around them, would the heartless throng
Have thrust unto his death; but with a bound
Spurning the cursed ship, he sought the wave,
And Nature's children did her poet save.

LXXVII.

Ilion, along whose streets in olden days
Shone that divinest form, for whose sweet face
A monarch sire with all his kingly race
Were too content to let their temples blaze —
Where art thou now? no massive columns raise
Their serried shafts to heaven — we may not trace
Xanthus and Simois, nor each storied place
Round which poetic memory fondly plays.
But in the verse of the old man divine
Thy windy towers are built eternally;
Nor shall the ages, as they ruin by,
Print on thy bulwarks one decaying sign.
So true is beauty, clothed in endless rime;
So false the sensual monuments of time.

LXXVIII.

Friend of my heart, here in my close green bower
I wait thy coming: slender clematis
And the rank wild-vine, with late primroses,
And classic tea-tree with small purple flower,
Are here, and foxglove with its bearded bell,
Haunt of the passing bee: and thy delight,
The lily of the valley, purest white,
Rising like fabled nymph from ocean-shell.
Nor wanting is Canova's art divine:
On the rude trunk, native in earth below,
The god of gladness, garlanded with vine,
And Ariadne re-assured from woe;
And the full noon, by leafy screen delayed,
Has spread the pebbled floor with fickle shade.

LXXIX.

TO CHARLES MERIVALE.

Thou friend whom chilling years have altered not,
When shall we once again by winter fire
Or in the summer sun, quench our desire
Of pleasant converse, mingling thought with thought?
For we have wandered far abroad, and brought
Treasures from many lands, — joys that require
The sympathy of friends that will not tire,
But find an interest though the tale be nought.
Come then, for Summer sheds her sickly flowers,
And the new buds, unable to expand,
Hang dripping on the stalk: notice that hours
Are near, in mercy portioned to our land,
When rest is granted to the outward eye,
And thought is busy with the things gone by.

LXXX.

MY ANCESTORS.

Unknown it is to me, who handed down
From sire to son mine humble family;
Whether they dwelt in low obscurity,
Or by achievements purchased high renown:
Whether with princely or baronial crown
Their brows were bound, or martyr-wreath of flame:
No glories mark the track through which my name
Hath come: I only know it as mine own.
Yet I am one of no mean parentage:
The poorest line of Christian ancestry
Might serve upon the world's unbounded stage
To act God's dealings: all mankind might see
More truth than now they know, were this my line
Of distant sires their evidence to join.

LXXXI.

THE TWO LOTS.

Two pilgrims on a pleasant road set forth:
Green was the herbage by their journey-side;
Through deep and shrubby dells their way they plied,
Fenced from the biting of the ruthless north;
At length said one, 'I would that we were high
On yonder hill, whence we might look out wide
On towns and plains, even to the distant tide
Of Ocean, bordered by the vaulting sky.'
Thus parted they: — one by the alder'd brook
Wandered in easeful calm; the other wound
Up the rock-path, with many a backward look
Tracing his progress, till no envious bound
Forbade his sight, and from the mountain-head
Earth, sea, and sky, in mighty prospect spread.

LXXXII.

The heart of man is everywhere the same:
In distant Savoy roamed we long ago
With one to guide us o'er the mountain-snow;
Scarce had we power in foreign tongue to frame
Unhindered converse; often did he name
Things strange to us, and dwell, in accents slow,
On wayside views, or aught we asked to know,
That we his skill in guidance might not blame.
Yet is there written all that old man's life
Deep on our memory; his cottage-hearth
Peopled with joy — his solitude and dearth
When God called thence the mother and the wife;
And how he looked, and said, 'I'll trust Him yet:'
All these are things which we can ne'er forget.[1]

[1] Some readers, who are acquainted with Chamounix, may be interested to know that this guide was David Couttet, the elder.

LXXXIII.

TO A FRIEND CONCERNED IN EDUCATION.

Force not to over-growth the subject mind:
Heaven's is the power that spread the native soil;
The tillage only asks thy careful toil,
On primal strength dependent: if confined
In depth and barren, simple be thy seed,
Of hardy grain: God's providence hath need
Of some to marshal well the ranks behind,
As of the lofty spirits born to lead.
But if the tender plants of truth thou sow,
Let there be depth of matter genial;
And if the frosts should nip, and strong winds blow,
Their kindly opposites should countervail:
Blest gifts, unfailing in their fostering might,
Sunshine by day, the dews of heaven by night.

LXXXIV.

Dear Spirit, lo, thy poet, full at heart,
Puts on his singing-garb and flowery gear,
To make sweet music in thy listening ear:
Too long hath he been mindless of his part;
But now before his sight come and depart
The dreams of thought in vision quick and clear;
And new creations of the soul appear,
Clothed in the glory of undying art.
Crush not, beloved, though with touch most pure,
The tender plants arising; stand beside,
And feed each springing leaf with daily showers:
So mayst thou see, in life's declining hours,
The goodly umbrage of the grove mature
Over the weary world spread far and wide.

LXXXV.

ON MY STONE INKSTAND.

Loud raged the tumult: Ocean far and near
Seethed with wild anger, up the sloping sand
Driving the shreds of foam; while, half in fear,
We battled with the tempest, on the strand
Scarcely upheld; or, clinging arm to arm,
In wedge compact: — now would we venture brave
Into the trench of the retreating wave;
Now shoreward flee, with not all-feigned alarm.
A challenge did my gentle sister speak:
'Yon pebble fetch, 'mongst those that furthest roll,
Pierced on one face with an unsightly hole!'
Beneath a crested wave, that curled to break,
I grasped the prize, not scathless; and since then
That stone hath held the stuff that feeds my truant pen.

LXXXVI.

JANUARY 19, 1839.

My fairy girl, amidst her mirthful play,
Suddenly kneeling, clasps her hands in one,
And prays the words she has been taught to pray
Morning and evening; when her prayer is done,
In calm, as though some Mighty One was near,
Who soothed her, but not awed, away she springs,
And runs to me with laughter silver-clear,
Till all our home with her full joyance rings.
Nor am I one who, with displeasure cold,
Such sport would chide; our heavenly Father's face
Each night and day her angel doth behold:
Her soul is filled with his baptismal grace;
Happy, if through her years and cares untold,
Such pure communion could her spirit hold.

LXXXVII.

We want but little: in the morning-tide,
Bread to renew our energies; at noon,
Cool shade, to quiet evening yielding soon;
And then a ramble by the hedgerow side,
Or what our cottage-embers can provide
Of social comfort; and at night, the boon
Of peaceful slumber, when the gleamy moon
Up the lone heavens in starry state doth ride.
All that is more than these, into our life
By accident of place or station brought,
Feeds not the silent growth of ripening thought,
Wisdom best learned apart from throngs and strife,
In the broad fields, the sky's unvalued wealth,
And seasons gliding past us in their stealth.

LXXXVIII.

The inward pleasure of our human soul
Oweth no homage to the tyrant Will:
Whether the roving spirit take its fill
Of strange delight, watching the far waves roll
And break upon the shore, — or by the bowl
Of some moss-lined fountain cool and still,
Or by the music of a tinkling rill,
Wander in maze of thought, without control:
Nor can the chains of ill-assured belief
Fetter the strivings of the deathless mind;
Nor dull prescription bound the throes of grief;
Spirits, in action nor degree confined,
Range the vast system: — whither, then, should I
But to sweet Nature for my wisdom fly?

LXXXIX.

Dost thou complain that, in thy weary toil,
Day after day takes from thee something dear;
So that less welcome through the circling year
Come the new seasons; — Spring, with waking smile;
And full, uncinctured Summer; and the guile
Of Autumn, lavishing, but stealing more;
And that close Winter brings thee not the store
Of sweet poetic labor, as erewhile? —
Be it thy care unfailing talk to hold
With Nature's children; be thou up at morn
Ere the first warbler sinks into the corn;
Stand and watch evening spread her tent with gold:
Thence draw thy treasures, of their worth secure;
Lower deceives; the source alone is pure.

XC.

ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν
χωροῦσι παγαί ——
EURIPID. *Medea.*

FRESH fount of feeling, which from earliest days
Hast sprung within mine heart, let not thy streams
Now fail me, when this world's unreal dreams
Fever my spirit; cool me, now the blaze
Of Mammon's temple burns my aching gaze;
Nor, though the world thy clearness shallow deems,
And all thy purity for nought esteems,
Shrink back into thy source in dread amaze.
And Thou, from whom is every perfect gift,
Speak to my spirit by Thy Church and Word;
Let Thy reminding voice be often heard
About my path; so shall my soul uplift
Her eyes, by growing cares cast down, and see, —
Though earth turn barren, — her fresh springs in Thee.

XCI.

PASSION-WEEK, 1845.

AGAIN the solemn season — and again
That bleeding Brow, those wounded Hands and Feet —
Again that piercèd Side my vision meet;
Afresh that holy Form is bowed with pain.
O Thou, the all-sufficing Victim, slain
For man's transgression; by Thy mercy sweet,
From God's right hand of power, Thy glory-seat,
To look upon Thy sorrowing people deign.
Unworthy, Lord, unworthy of Thy name,
Behold Thy sinful Church; by hatred rent,
In the vain world, and not in Thee, content:
Cast us not off, O Lord! in deepest shame,
On bended knees, we utter our lament,
Up to Thy throne in daily sighing sent.

XCII.

THAT DAY WAS THE PREPARATION, AND THE SABBATH DREW ON.

Rise and depart, thou highly-favored one,
From the sad cross, by thine adopted led:
Enough of bitter tears hath now been shed:
'Behold thy mother, and behold thy son.'
The meed of promised glory is not won,
The Prince of Life is numbered with the dead;
Each lingering hope of blessedness hath fled;
The treason hath been wrought — the dark deed done.
Thus down the steep of cruel Calvary
Passed those two holy mourners, hand in hand:
But as the brooding darkness from the land
Rose curtain-like, so comfort cheerily
Broke dawning on their hearts, and visions high
Of glory yet unshaped went dimly by.

XCIII.

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'—where are these?
'One body, and one bread:'—I see it not:
For in the impotence of human thought
Each sinner now himself alone doth please:
Farewell, sweet love and holy charities:—
Shall it be said that we of God are taught,
While Christian Christian tears, in fierce onslaught,
With weapons fetched from carnal armories?
Therefore again, Lord God of Love, we fall
Before Thy footstool, bold to intercede
For our weak brethren. Hear us, while we plead
For those who Thee forsake, and erring all,
Some of Apollos are and some of Paul,
In self-directed pride:—O Lord, how long?

XCIV.

Have pity, Holy One, on those who stray!
Thou kind and loving Shepherd, fetch Thou home
The rebel-flocks who in the desert roam:
Fair is the sky as yet, and smooth the way, —
But soon shall darkness gather o'er the day:
Then where shall be the voice that aim'd to teach,
The guides self-chosen, who did smooth things preach,
The men of many words, unused to pray?
Didst Thou not give Thy life for them, O Lord?
Open their blinded eyes that they may see;
Turn them from self to look alone on Thee;
Show them the living wonders of Thy word;
Let cries of triumph through Thy Church be heard —
'He that was lost is found, the slave is free!'

XCV.

While the vain world around us buys and sells,
And falls before its pomp and vanity,
Each day, O Lord, in humble wise to Thee
We come, to draw from Thy salvation's wells
Waters of life: each day the mourner tells
To Thee his tale of woe: the healing tree
Sheds every day its leaves, priceless and free,
Whose balm the fever of the serpent quells.
Thou Blessed One, to cruel pangs for us
Resigned, accept our contrite sacrifice:
Feed us with grace each day in new supplies:
Look we on Thee whom we have pierced, and thus,
Though sorrow rend our heart, and flood our eyes,
Shall faith above the gloom in steady radiance rise.

XCVI.

ASCENSION DAY, 1845.

They stood and gazed into the summer sky,
That earnest band of holy men and true:
It was no vision that might pass them by,
As the bright clouds enwrapt Him from their view;
No self-withdrawal of His form still nigh:
As victory was strange, and hope was new,
More gloom athwart their hearts this sorrow drew,
While vainly upward searched each eager eye.
But on their ear those voices' unison
Broke, as the choir of heaven on men below:
And, as the portals of the morning, shone
Their glistering raiment: and though still alone
We dwell without our Lord, yet this we know,
That He shall thus return as they beheld Him go.

XCVII.

THE CHURCH IN THE PARK.

Dark is the spot and damp. The great man's hall
Keeps off the pleasant sun. The stones are green;
And here and there a gaping breach is seen,
Or window-arch despoiled, or brick-patched wall.
Within 'tis desolate and cheerless all:
Moist boxes, shoulder-high, where seats have been;
Two rampant beasts on tottering chancel-screen;
A roof that waits but the first snow, to fall.
O sin and shame! not fifty yards away,
Corniced above and carpeted below,
With pictures bright, and plate in gleaming show,
Riseth the temple, whither day by day
A family held Christian doth repair
To glut their appetite with sumptuous fare!

XCVIII.

'THERE IS ONE BAPTISM:' thus wrote holy Paul —
Behold its only trace, yon ancient stone
Forth to dishonor and destruction thrown,
Catching the drippings from the chancel-wall.
'WE, BEING MANY, ALL PARTAKE ONE BREAD:'
Behold in yonder unfrequented quire,
For two old men, four women, and the squire,
Three times a year the scanty banquet spread.
Are we His people? is the Lord our King?
Up then for shame, and the old ways restore —
Give to the Lord the honor due, and bring
Glad presents to His courts; that so, before
His wrath arise upon our Church and land,
The incense of our prayer may stay His lifted hand.

XCIX.

DAY BY DAY WE MAGNIFY THEE.

O BARE and aimless mockery — 'day by day?'
To-morrow, and the next day, and the next,
No praise will hence ascend; no sacred text
Be uttered to the people. Come who may,
For prayer or thought, these gates shall say them nay:
Be they in anguish, or with doubt perplext,
Or with the world's unceasing billows vext,
We lock the Church, and order all away.
O low estate of holy hope and faith!
Are we to think that He who hallowed one,
Of all the other days requireth none?
Or that our working-days are safe from death?
Cease your Ambrosian hymn — or this at most,
Perform the promise, ye who make the boast.

C.

νῦν, ὦ κοῖναι, λύκιόν τε ποτόν,
λείπομεν ὑμᾶς, λείπομεν, οὐ δὴ
δύξης ποτὲ τῆσδ' ἐπιβάντες.
SOPH. *Philoct.*

In dreamy days of boyhood and of youth
Sweet Poesy whispered often in mine ear;
And I could then with voice distinct and clear
Repeat her ditties: but of late, in sooth,
The sterner mandates of unflattering Truth
Have filled my hearing, making not less dear
High strains of verse — but hallowing with fear
My thoughts, and keen remorse, and backward ruth.
Therefore farewell, ye pleasant melodies
Of song, heroic, holy, or pastoral:
Farewell, ye shades and voiceful forests all;
No more along your sward-paths dark with trees
Shall wander he, who, lightly skilled to please,
Could yet from leaf and rock poetic numbers call.

THE SCHOOL OF THE HEART.

LESSON THE FIRST.

'Whether it be love, or it be science, that we handle, or whatever art pursue into its more secret places and higher forms, we must confess that we shall have found at length something (and that whereon all doth depend) which neither is, nor belongs to, ourselves.'

In converse with a dear companion, the sources, progress, and accessories of youthful love are shown; and how this was not sufficient for the heart which yearned after the glories of God's church.

THE spring is coming round — the buds have burst,
And on the coppice-path, and in the bower,
The leaping spray of sunlight leaf-inwrought
Sports to the gentle bidding of the breeze:
And far away into the inner grove,
Bright green, the mosses cluster on the stems,
Till where the thickest arbor doth embower
Sweet solitary flowers of meekest eye,
That dwell for ever with the silent dews.

Sweet partner of my hopes, who through the young
And sunny years of life hast been to me
An opening bud most delicately nursed,

Methinks this day hath risen upon us two
As on the joyous earth and teeming wood —
To summon into life the folded flowers,
And bid our plant of love spring boldly up,
Fearing no check from frost or blighting dew.

No one is present with us; none is here
But thou and I; so I may tell my thoughts,
Now thou hast picked thine apron full of flowers;
For I have much to tell.

Along the east
The clear pale light of the morn is brooding still;
And down our favorite path, on either side,
The little leaves are glittering in the sun;
So we will talk away the morning-tide
Under the soft bright April. Let us sit
Together on that slope, where cluster thick
The full-blown primroses, and playfully
The tender drooping wood-anemones
Toss to the breeze in turn their silver bells.

'T is long since we were free to while away
So many hours in converse: and I feel
Strange yearnings to pour out my inner soul,
To open forth unto thee all the stores
Whereby my spirit hath been furnished
For the great war with evil.

Few have lived
As we have lived, unsevered; our young life
Was but a summer's frolic: we have been

Like two babes passing hand in hand along
A sunny bank on flowers. The busy world
Goes on around us, and its multitudes
Pass by me, and I look them in the face,
But cannot read such meaning as I read
In this of thine : and thou too dost but move
Among them for a season, but returnest
With a light step and smiles to our old seats,
Our quiet walks, our solitary bower.
Some we love well; the early presences
That were first round us, and the silvery tones
Of those most far-away and dreamy voices
That sounded all about us at the dawn
Of our young life, — these, as the world of things
Sets in upon our being like a tide,
Keep with us, and are ever uppermost.
And some there are, tall, beautiful, and wise,
Whose step is heavenward, and whose souls have past
Out from the nether darkness, and been born
Into a new and glorious universe,
Who speak of things to come ; but there is that
In thy soft eye and long-accustomed voice
Would win me from them all.

For since our birth,
Our thoughts have flowed together in one stream :
All through the seasons of our infancy
The same hills rose about us — the same trees,
Now bare, now sprinkled with the tender leaf,
Now thick with full dark foliage; the same church,
Our own dear village-church, has seen us pray,
In the same seat, with hands clasped side by side;

And we have sung together; and have walked
Full of one thought, along the homeward lane;
And so were we built upwards for the storm
That on my walls hath fallen unsparingly,
Shattering their frail foundations; and which thou
Hast yet to look for, — but hast found the help
Which then I knew not — rest thee firmly there!

When first I issued forth into the world,
Well I remember — that unwelcome morn,
When we rose long before the accustomed hour
By the faint taper-light; and by that gate
We just now swung behind us carelessly,
I gave thee the last kiss: — I travelled on,
Giving my mind up to the world without,
Which poured in strange ideas of strange things,
New towns, new churches, new inhabitants: —
And ever and anon some happy child
Beneath a rose-trailed porch played as I past:
And then the thought of thee swept through my soul,
And made the hot drops stand in either eye: —
And so I travelled — till between two hills,
Two turf-enamelled mounds of brightest green,
Stretched the blue limit of the distant sea,
Unknown to me before: — then with strange joy,
Forgetting all, I gazed upon that sea,
Till I could see the white waves leaping up,
And all my heart leapt with them: — so I past
Southward, and neared that wilderness of waves,
And stopt upon its brink; and when the even
Spread out upon the sky unusual clouds,
I sat me down upon a wooded cliff,

Watching the earth's last daylight fade away,
Till that the dim wave far beneath my feet
Did make low moanings to the infant moon,
And the lights twinkled out along the shore;
Then I looked upwards, and I saw the stars,
Sirius, Orion, and the Northern wain,
And the Seven Sisters, and the beacon-flame
Of bright Arcturus, — every one the same
As when I showed them thee. — 'But yesternight,'
I said, 'she gazed with me upon those stars:
Why did we not agree to look on them
Both at one moment every starlight night,
And think that the same star beheld us both?'

But I shall weary thee. — That very night,
As I past shorewards under the dark hills,
I made a vow that I would live on love,
Even the love of thee; — this all my faith,
My only creed, my only refuge this.
So day past after day; and every one
Gave me a fainter image of thy face,
Till thou wert vanished quite: nor could I then —
No, not with painful strain of memory,
Bring back one glimpse of thy lost countenance.
Then I would sit and try to hear thy voice,
And catch and lose its tones successively,
Till that, too, left me — till the very words
Which thou hadst written had no trace of thee —
But it was pain to see them. So my soul,
Self-bound and self-tormented, lingered on,
Evermore vainly striving after love,
Which evermore fled from her, till at last

She ceased to strive, and sunk, a lifeless thing —
No sense, no vigor — dead to all around,
But most to thee. Meanwhile the golden hours
Of life flowed on apace, but weary seemed
The universe of toil, weary the day;
I had no joy but sleep, rare visitant
Of my lone couch.

What times of purest joy
Were then my brief returns: — what greetings then,
What wanderings had we on our native slopes:
What pleasant mockings of the tearful past.
And I remember well, one summer's night,
A clear, soft, silver moonlight, thou and I
Sat a full hour together silently,
Looking abroad into the pure pale heaven:
Perchance thou hast forgotten; but my arm
Was on thy shoulder, and thy clustering locks,
Hung lightly on my hand, and thy clear eye
Glistered beside my forehead; and at length
Thou saidst, 'T is time we went to rest;' and then
We rose and parted for the night. No words
But those were spoken, and we never since
Have told each other of that moment. Oft
Has it come o'er me, and I oft have thought
Of sharing it with thee; but my resolve
Has been spread over with a thousand things
Of various import, till this April morn,
And we have shared it now.

But soon again
I left my home. There was no beauty now

Of lands new seen, but the same dreary road
Which bore me from thee first. I had no joy
In looking on the ocean; and, full sad
With inward frettings and unrest, I reached
That steep-built village on the southern shore.

Sometimes I wandered down the wooded dells
That sloped into the sea, and sat me down
On piles of rocks, in a most private place,
Not without melody of ancient stream
Down-dripping from steep sides of brightest moss,
And tumbling onwards through the dark ravine;
While the lithe branches of the wizard elm
Dangled athwart the deep blue crystalline. —
Often the memory comes o'er me now,
Like life upon a long-entranced corpse.
I knew not then aught of that inner soul
That giveth life to beauty — knew not then,
How moments of most painful vacancy
In beauty's presence, print their footmarks deep
On the soul's pathways, and how glory and light
Shine from them at a distance; — how we gather
Our treasures in the shade, and know them not
Till they steal lustre from the living sun,
Flattering the new-born vision of our souls
With richest stores of unprovided joy.

Sometimes I sat and strove to gather hope
Out of the blank cold future; but the years
Of onward life grew darker as I looked:
I saw sad shapes mustered along the path,
Beckoning with silent finger, and young hopes

That bloomed most delicately, stretched clay-cold
And ghastly pale upon the earth; and then
Hot tears burst from me, and my sinful soul
Wept herself dry in utter solitude.

Tears may not wash away the spirit's stain: —
The soul that sitteth down in dreariness,
Telling her sorrow to herself alone,
Is not the purest; for the very sting
Of the heart's bitterness hath power to spread
Most pestilent corruption, and its wound
Festereth within untended. Sin is a fire
Self-hated, self-tormenting — a wild pest
Of rabid flame, that roareth to be quenched,
And may not but in blood. Sin will have blood;
And if it find it not, will wrench abroad
The very heart that holds it, and will dip
Its hissing fangs deep in the purple stream,
Tainting the very issues of all life
With foul black drops of death; and not so quenched,
Feed on the young supplies of vital joy,
Scorching the inner fountains of the soul.

But, like the sunrise on the dark wild sea,
There rose upon my spirit a great light: —
I was like one fast fettered in a cave,
Before whose dull and night-accustomed eyes
Some naphtha-fire, up-flaring from behind,
Marshals strange shadows on the rifted vault,[1] —
Till there came by One of mild countenance,

[1] Plato, Repub. b. vii. § 1.

And beautiful apparel, at whose touch
My chains fell round me, and I followed on
Up rugged steeps into the outer day:
But so sight-blasting was that lurid night,
That the clear light was all too pure for me,
The gentle moon too beautiful: but soon
I shall look forth undazzled; and ere long,
With purified and unbeclouded sight,
Gaze the broad sunshine in his place on high.

—'*She hath loved much, and therefore is forgiven:*'
Then Love is first; and, in the sleep of sin,
Come sudden startings of brief consciousness,
And breaks in the dull slumber, as from sounds
Of sweetest music, that give instant joy,
But mix the after-dreams with strange regret;—
As one who, wandering in the summer night,
Is ware of sudden light, and, looking up
Betwixt Orion and the Pleiades,
Sees pass along a trail of white star-fire,
That fades upon the night and leaves no trace;
One moment he rejoices, but the next
His soul is sad, because he is alone:—
Or (for we love to chase similitude
Into its close recesses when we speak
Of things but shadowed forth and half-defined)
Like one who hath seen play across his path
A glimmer of faint lightning, and stands still,
Breathlessly waiting, till the deep long moan
Of far-off thunder from a low-hung cloud
Hath died into the air,—then sets he forth,
By slopes of bright green larch, and hedgerows sweet

With thickest roses, to the cottaged knoll,
Where gleams against the blackness pinnacled
From out its elms, his light tall village-tower.

What can be purer than a soul forgiven?
He who hath never fallen, may err perchance
In the admission of a vague desire;
But when the spirit hath come out from thrall
Into the upper air of liberty,
She hath no backward longings, but looks on
Up the steep pathways of unfolding light.
Knowest thou not that it is sweetest far,
After the languid pulse and sunken eye,
To go abroad beneath the sunny heaven,
Freely to breathe, and feel through all the frame
The indifference of justly-balanced health?

It may be that all evil teems with good:
It may be that the sorrows of this state
Are but the birth-pangs of a glorious life,
And all the hindrances of mortal flesh
A grosser matter that shall polish off,
Brightening the silver which it erst obscured. —

But stay we here, for we may search no more:
The heart is deeper than the power of words,
And language, many-voiced, doth not suffice
For all the combinations of pure thought; —
Even in the reasonings of the over-wise
Speech hath a limit, which she may not pass;
Then how much rather, when we talk of Love.

I have been somewhat cruel to thy flowers,
For I have cheated them of a few days
Of modest pride; they might have lived, perchance,
Hung round our shady arbor, duly fed
From the evening water-pot; — or, for quaint show,
Stuck deftly among leaves that knew them not,
Puzzled the after-thoughts of passers-by.
Their bloom is shed; but I have fetched for thee
Flowers blooming in the inner grove of thought,
Sweet nurslings of a never-fading spring —
The sunshine trophies of a victory
Fought for in frosts and darkness, and achieved
Only by light from heaven to see my foes.

LESSON THE SECOND.

'And in the temple-service of our souls, it does not become us, because we have sometimes seen the cloud fill the house of the Lord, and all our ministering has been lost in the glory, not to take our daily blessedness out of His mild and usual presence, or to think that we may prescribe to Him His occasions of brighter manifestation.'

The teaching of the young heart new washed from sin, by the wonderful works of God; and how, in the well-ordered soul, all nature hath its set and appointed place.

My sweet companion, who hast ever been
Beside me in all toils, refreshing oft
My weary spirit with low whisperings
Of hope that spoke not falsely; in whose sight
My young life floweth pleasantly along;
Sit thou beside me once again, and take
Thy magic pencils — they will serve thee well
To help thy patience; for my heart is full,
And I perchance may wander waywardly:
Besides, this bank is known to us of old;
For yonder is the ivy-girded trunk,
Bright mouldering timber, clothed with darkest green;
And yonder those two ashes on the steep
And grassy slope; and underneath, the moor

Stretches its pastured level far away
To the grey mountains and the Severn sea:
And from that very brake, the nightingale,
In the sweet silence of the summer eve,
Poured forth a wavy stream of melody, —
Signal to one who waited with thick breath
And throbbing bosom, all afraid to speak
One low-breathed word; — that evening thou wert mine.

Sit thou beside me — we will talk no more
Of dim and cloudy childhood, ere the spring
Burst on us, when with searchings wearisome
We sought some centre for our errant hopes;
But underneath this sky of clearest June,
We will discourse, as we are wont, of things
Most gentle, of most gentle causes sprung,
That make no wave upon the stream of life,
That are not written in the memory's book,
That come not with observance; but from which,
As from a myriad stones, costly though small,
Is built the mansion of the blessed soul.

Look out upon the earth, or meditate
Upon the varying glories of the sky,
As we have looked on them from windy hills,
Or from the moonlit window; fullest joy
Flows on thy heart, and silent thankfulness
Drowns all thy struggling thoughts; doth not this bliss
Wax ever deeper with the years of life?
And when past pleasures come upon the soul
Like long-forgotten landscapes of our youth,
Are not these spots clad with peculiar light,

The brightest blossoms in the paradise
Of recollections of a soul forgiven?
There is no joy that is not built on peace;
Peace is our birthright, and our legacy,
Signed with a hand that never promised false.
And we have fed on peace; and the green earth,
With all that therein is, the mighty sea,
The breath of the spring-winds, and all the host
Of clustered stars, give fittest nourishment
To the peace-loving-soul.

'*Not as the world*
Giveth, give I to you;' for what have souls
Whose vision labors with the film of sin,
Who struggle in the twilight of eclipse,
To do with beauty and the joy of thought?
Our very joys have been redeemed with blood;
Our very liberty is bought anew:
The unforgiven pleasures of the world
Are but a dance in chains; freedom of thought
Owes fealty to sin; and Fancy's self,
That airiest and most unfettered thing,
Is but the prisoned maniac's dream of bliss.

Oft have I listened to a voice that spake
Of cold and dull realities of life.
Deem we not thus of life: for we may fetch
Light from a hidden glory, which shall clothe
The meanest thing that is with hues of heaven.
If thence we draw not glory, all our light
Is but a taper in a chambered cave,
That giveth presence to new gulfs of dark.

Our light should be the broad and open day;
And as we love its shining, we shall look
Still on the bright and daylight face of things.

Is it for nothing that the mighty sun
Rises each morning from the Eastern plain
Over the meadows, fresh with hoary dew?
Is it for nothing that the shadowy trees
On yonder hill-top, in the summer night
Stand darkly out before the golden moon?
Is it for nothing that the autumn boughs
Hang thick with mellow fruit, what time the swain
Presses the luscious juice, and joyful shouts
Rise in the purple twilight, gladdening him
Who labored late, and homeward wends his way
Over the ridgy grounds, and through the mead,
Where the mist broods along the fringed stream?
Far in the Western sea dim islands float,
And lines of mountain-coast receive the sun
As he sinks downward to his resting-place,
Ministered to by bright and crimson clouds:
Is it for nothing that some artist-hand
Hath wrought together things so beautiful?
Noon follows morn — the quiet breezeless noon,
And pleasant even, season of sweet sounds
And peaceful sights; and then the wondrous bird
That warbles like an angel, full of love,
From copse and hedgerow side pouring abroad
Her tide of song into the listening night.
Beautiful is the last gleam of the sun
Slanted through twining branches; beautiful
The birth of the faint stars — first, clear and pale,

The steady-lustred Hesper, like a gem
On the flushed bosom of the West; and then
Some princely fountain of unborrowed light,
Arcturus, or the Dogstar, or the seven
That circle without setting round the pole.
Is it for nothing at the midnight hour
That solemn silence sways the hemisphere,
And ye must listen long before ye hear
The cry of beasts, or fall of distant stream,
Or breeze among the tree-tops — while the stars
Like guardian spirits watch the slumbering earth?

Can human energies be scattered all
In a long life — a slumber deep and chill
Settle upon the soul — a palsy bind
The spiritual limbs — and all the strings
Of that sweet instrument, the mind of man,
Remain untuned, untouched? — What if in dreams
The struggling fancy from her prison break
And wander undirected, gathering up
Unnatural combinations of strange things,
Of sights, it may be, beautiful and wild, —
Long gleaming reaches of some slow-paced stream,
And boats of gold and pearl, with coral masts,
Floating unguided in a faint green light
Of twisted boughs, and heavy-plumaged birds
Of many colors, roosting all the night
On rambling branches of a giant wood? —
And what if voices in the middle night
Full on thine ear in chimy murmurs rush,
That warble of deep skies and silver sheen, —
And bright eyes twinkle, far away but clear,

Receding as they twinkle, and with charm
Unknown the ravished spirit drawing on?
These are not wholesome nurture for the soul,
Nor sounds and sights like these the daily bread
It asks from Heaven: these are the errant paths
Of those great flaming brushes in the sky,
Now dangerously near the maddening fire,
Now chill and darkling in the gulfs of space,
Unlike the steady moderated course
Of habitable worlds.

There lie around
Thy daily walk great store of beauteous things,
Each in its separate place most fair, and all
Of many parts disposed most skilfully,
Making in combination wonderful
An individual of a higher kind;
And that again in order ranging well
With its own fellows, till thou rise at length
Up to the majesty of this grand world;—
Hard task; and seldom reached by mortal souls,
For frequent intermission, and neglect
Of close communion with the humblest things;
But in rare moments, whether Memory
Hold compact with Invention, or the door
Of Heaven hath been a little pushed aside,
Methinks I can remember, after hours
Of unpremeditated thought in woods
On western steeps, that hung a pervious screen
Before blue mountains and the distant sea,
A sense of a clear brightness in my soul,
A day-spring of mild radiance, like the light

First-born of the great Fiat, that ministered
Unto the earth before the sun was made.

Evening and morning — those two ancient names
So linked with childish wonder, when with arm
Fast wound about the neck of one we loved,
Oft questioning, we heard Creation's tale —
Evening and morning ever brought to me
Strange joy; the birth and funeral of light, —
Whether in clear unclouded majesty
The large Sun poured his effluence abroad,
Or the grey clouds rolled silently along,
Dropping their doubtful tokens as they passed;
Whether above the hills intensely glowed
Bright lines of parting glory in the west,
Or from the veil of faintly-reddened mist
The darkness slow descended on the earth;
The passage to a state of things all new —
New fears and new enjoyments — this was all
Food for my seeking spirit: I would stand
Upon the jutting hills that overlook
Our level moor, and watch the daylight fade
Along the prospect: now behind the leaves
The golden twinkles of the westering sun
Deepened to richest crimson: now from out
The solemn beech-grove, through the natural aisles
Of pillared trunks, the glory in the west
Showed like Jehovah's presence-fire, beheld
In olden times above the Mercy-seat
Between the folded wings of Cherubim; —
I loved to wander, with the evening star
Heading my way, till from the palest speck

Of virgin silver, evermore lit up
With radiance as by spirits ministered,
She seemed a living pool of golden light;
I loved to learn the strange array of shapes
That pass along the circle of the year;
Some, for the love of ancient lore, I kept;
And they would call into my fancy's eye
Chaldæan beacons, over the drear sand
Seen faintly from thick-towered Babylon
Against the sunset — shepherds in the field,
Watching their flocks by night — or shapes of men
And high-necked camels, passing leisurely
Along the starred horizon, where the spice
Swims in the air, in Araby the Blest;
And some, as Fancy led, I figured forth,
Misliking their old names; one circlet bright
Gladdens me often, near the northern wain,
Which, with a childish playfulness of choice
That hath not passed away, I loved to call
The crown of glory, by the righteous Judge
Against the day of his appearing, laid
In store for him who fought the fight of faith.

I ever loved the Ocean, as 't had been
My childhood's playfellow: in sooth it was;
For I had built me forts upon its sands,
And launched my little navies in the creeks,
Careless of certain loss; so it would play
Even as it listed with them, I were pleased.
I loved to follow with the backward tide
Over rough rocks and quaintly delving pools,
Till that the land-cliffs lessened, and I trod

With cautious step on slippery crags and moist,
With sea-weed clothed, like the green hair of Nymphs,
The Nereids' votive hair, that on the rocks
They hang when storms are past, to the kind power
That saved their sparry grottoes.

And at night
I wandered often, when the winds were up,
Over the pathless hills, till I could hear
Borne fitly upon the hurrying blast
The curfew-bell, with lingering strokes and deep,
From underlying town; then all was still
But the low murmuring of the distant sea;
And then again the new-awakened wind
Howled in the dells, and through the bended heath
Swept whistling by my firmly-planted feet.

Eternal rocks — that lift your heads on high,
Grey with the tracks of ages that have past
Over your serried brows, with many a scar
Of thunder-stroke deep-riven, from out whose clefts
The gnarled oak, and yew, and tender ash,
Poured forth like waters, trail adown the steep —
Ye stand to figure to our human view
The calm and never-altering character
Of great Eternity — like some vast pier
Fixed, while the fleeting tide of mortal things
Flows onward from its sight. The mighty men
Of ages gone have past beneath your crest
And cast an upward look, and ye have grown
Into their being, and been created part
Of the great Mind; and of your influence some

Hath past into the thoughts that live and burn
Through all the ages of the peopled world.
Your presence hath been fruitful to my soul
Of mighty lessons; whether inland far
Ye lift your jutting brows from grassy hills,
Or on the but of some great promontory
Keep guard against the sleepless siege of waves.
Once I remember when most visible light
Shone from you on my spirit — 'twas an eve
In fall of summer, when the weaker births
Of the great forest change their robes of green;
On such an eve, I climbed into a nook
Bowered with leaves and canopied with crags
On the loved border of the western shore.
Over the topmost cliff the horned moon,
Not eight days old, shone mildly; under foot
The mighty ocean rolled its multitude
Of onward-crowding ridges, that with crash
Of thunder broke upon the jutting rocks;
And in the northern sky, where not an hour
The day had sunk, a pomp of tempest-clouds
Passed wildly onward over the calm lines
Of the hue of faded sunset. Wearily
Sighed the thick oaks upon the seaward steep,
And the melancholy sea-bird wailed aloft,
Now poised in the mid-air, now with swift sweep
Descending; and again on balanced wings
Hovering, or wheeling dismally about,
With short importunate cry.

But ye the chief,
Trees, that along our pleasant native slope

Pendant with clustering foliage, in the light
Of parting evening sleep most peacefully,
Gathering to the eye your separate heads
Into a dark and misty mass of green;
Ye can bear witness how with constant care
I mourned your tribute to the autumn winds,
And hailed with you the sweet return of spring,
And watched with fondest care the tender green;
Ye sleep the winter through, and burst abroad
In the morning of the year; and sweetest songs
Sound through your arbors all the happy May,
Till callow broods take wing, and summer's sun
Darkens the tender green upon the leaf;
And then ye stand majestic, glorying
In strength of knotted trunk and branches vast,
Daring the noonday heat, that withers up
The orchis-flower and foxglove at your feet,
Save where your mighty shadows gloomily
Recline upon the underlying sward.
I looked upon you when the April moon
Sprinkled your forms with light, and the dewball lay
All night upon the branch — listening each year
When the first breeze might stir your boughs new-clothed,
Or when the rain all through the summer-day
Fell steadily upon the leaves, mine ear
Soothing with the faint music's even chime.

These, and a thousand things that men pass by,
Served for my spiritual nourishment:
Nor wanted high example, to my heart
Laid often, and in secret cherished up

With oft-recurring sweet encouragement;
Nor words of import deep, that fall on us
In solemn places, when we note them not;
But most one sacred thought, linked in my breast
To a thousand memories that can never die —
Sounding upon me in the hallowed hour
Of Sabbath-service from the wondrous book; —
It was that He, the only Son of Heaven
That took His joys and woes from things below,
When He would pour His holy soul in prayer,
Went forth beneath the moonlight — through the lines
Of trembling olive-leaves, to where the path
Came sudden out upon the open hill; —
There He stood waiting till the flame from heaven
Lighted upon the inward sacrifice
Of thoughts most pure — and then the holy words
Came musically forth upon the night,
More sweet than tinkling Kedron, or the pipe
Of distant nightingale: — or on the cliff
Above the tossing lake He prayed and stood,
And through the flight of jarring elements
Came unimpeded swiftly gliding down
From the Father's hand a healing drop of peace
Upon his wounded soul. On mountain heights
All the mid-hours of night, with serried crags
Towering in the moonlight overhead,
And through a channelled dell stretching away,
The plains of Galilee seen from afar,
Till morn alone He prayed — whether the cup
Of self-determined suffering passed athwart
His forward vision, and the Father's wrath
Upon His human soul pressed heavily,

Or for the welfare of His chosen flock
He wrestled in an agony of prayer
That their faith fail not. Even the love of Him
Now mingled in my bosom with all sounds
And sights that I rejoiced in — and in hours
Of self-arraigning thought, when the dull world
With all its saws of heartlessness and pride
Came close upon me, I approved my joys
And simple fondnesses, on trust that He
Who taught the lesson of unwavering faith
From the meek lilies of green Palestine,
Would fit the earthly things that most I loved
To the high teaching of my patient soul.
And the sweet hope that sprung within me now
Seemed all-capacious, and from every source
Apt to draw comfort; I perceived within
A fresh and holy light rise mildly up;
Not morning,[1] nor the planet beautiful
That heads the bright procession, when the sun
Hath sunk into the west, is half so fair.
This was that Light which lighteth every man
That comes into the world; from the first gleam
Of momentary joy, that twinkles forth
Brightly and often from the infant's eye,
To that which seldom comes on common days, —
The steady overflow of calm delight
In the well-ripened soul; all thoughts which spring
From daily sights and sounds, all active hopes
Brought from the workings of the outer world

[1] οὔθ' ἕσπερος, οὔθ' ἑῷος οὕτω θαυμαστός. — *Aristotle, Ethics;* said of δικαιοσύνη.

Upon the life within, here have their fixed
And proper dwelling-place.

As on the front
Of some cathedral pile, ranged orderly,
Rich tabernacles throng, of sainted men
Each in his highday robes magnificent,
Some topped with crowns, the Church's nursing sires,
And some, the hallowed temple's serving-men,
With crosiers deep-embossed, and comely staves
Resting aslant upon their reverend form,
Guarding the entrance well; while round the walls,
And in the corbels of the massy nave,
All circumstance of living child and man
And heavenly influence, in parables
Of daily-passing forms is pictured forth.
So all the beautiful and seemly things
That crowd the earth, within the humble soul
Have place and order due; because there dwells
In the inner temple of the holy heart
The presence of the Spirit from above:
There are His tabernacles; there His rites
Want not their due performance, nor sweet strains
Of heavenly music, nor a daily throng
Of worshippers, both those who minister
In service fixed — the mighty principles
And leading governors of thought; and those
Who come and go, the troop of fleeting joys —
All hopes, all sorrows, all that enter in
Through every broad receptacle of sense.

LESSON THE THIRD.

'The deuyll they say is dead
The deuill is dead !
It may wel so be ;
Or els they wold see
Otherwise, and flee
From worldly vanitie,
And foule covetousnes
And other wretchednes,
Fickell falsenesse,
Varyablenesse
With vnstablenesse.
* * *
Farwel benignity !
Farwell simplicitye !
Farwell humilitye !
Farwel good charity !'

SKELTON.

How parables look forth from the face of the world ; and while Nature is the body, Truth is the soul. A yearning for the meekness and faith of the days that are past ; and a lament over our waywardness and pride.

THE dews descend — the soft and gentle dews ;
Over the homeward meadows, stretching forth
Far into the grey mist, the cattle lie
Most tranquilly ; the river's silver swathes
Move not, or slumber silently along ;
The cups of the water-lilies are not stirred
By passing eddies, but with countenance
Turned up to Heaven, they lie and let the dark

Come down on them, and then they pass beneath
Into their wat'ry bed, till the young morn
Looks slant upon the surface of the stream.
And there, among the golden company,
Floats like a queen that grand and ancient flower,
With name [1] that passing from the charmèd tongue
Reminds us of low melodies in sleep,
So honey-sweet, so musically soft —
Like Artemis [2] on Erymanthus' ridge
Taking her pleasure in the mountain chase,
With the field-nymphs around her playing blithe,
Her beautiful brow she lifts among them all,
And easy to be known, though all are fair: —
That flower of many honors, dwelt upon
By old prophetic light, in time of yore
A mighty parable of mystic things,
All sacred, leaf and bud and banded stalk,
And root that struck into the bed of Nile,
Or by the lake Mæotis — or perchance
Under the bank of Jordan fringed with palms: —
Fit and accepted emblem of that first
Great resurrection of the chosen few,
When from the waters blank and desolate

[1] The lotus-flower.

[2] οἵη δ' Ἄρτεμις εἶσι κατ' οὔρεος ἰοχέαιρα,
ἠὲ κατὰ Τηΰγετον περιμήκετον, ἠὲ Ἐρύμανθον,
τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι·
τῇ δέ θ' ἅμα Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
ἀγρονόμοι παίζουσι· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα Λητώ·
πασάων δ' ὕπερ ἵησι κάρη ἔχει ἠδὲ μέτωπα,
ῥεῖα δ' ἀριγνώτη πέλεται, καλαὶ δέ τε πᾶσαι.

Hom. Od. ζ.

They rose like thee; and token not unknown
Of other and of deeper tendencies
Of all things on this earth — how in the track
And visible procession of events
One tale is told, one moral figured forth, —
Birth, death, and resurrection — birth, and death,
And resurrection, ever and anon
Held up in clearest light to human thought.
The milky tender seed is fashioned first
From the flower that dies in birth; through cruel blights
And under adverse skies, with pain and toil,
If not self-known, yet rendered evident
By the careful nature that it looketh for,
It ripens into age; and then it dies
In the brown ground, and chilly nights and snows
Pass over it; at last the kindly sun
Bursts out upon it, and it breaks its grave,
And issues forth, a beautiful green thing,
A fresh and lively scion. And in things
That look less like our own humanity,
If we would search, the same great parable
Is ever taken up and told abroad,
And will be till the end. Beauty and Truth
Go hand in hand — and 'tis the providence
Of the great Teacher that doth clearest show
The gentler and more lovely to our sight,
Training our souls by frequent communings
With her who meets us in our daily path
With greetings and sweet talk, to pass at length
Into the presence, by unmarked degrees,
Of that her sterner sister; best achieved,
When from a thousand common sights and sounds

The power of Beauty passes sensibly
Into the soul, clenching the golden links
That bind the memories of brightest things.
So to that queenly virgin[1] on the shore
Of old Phæacia, neither mortal man
Nor woman might be likened, but one branch
Of budding palm, in Delos that upsprung
Fast by Apollo's altar from the ground.
Thus, irrespective of all names of kind
Is heavenly Beauty — spread along the earth,
In all created things, always the same.

Many have held that pure and holy truth
Dwells only in the solitary soul;
That man with man conversing may not share
Aught of the spiritual inward life;
That soul approaching within reach of soul
Fosters a longing after things cast off
With the first slough of Nature: — some have said
That the green earth, with all her leafy paths
And her blue hills, hath nothing of delight
Fitted for holy men; — yet they have loved
To wander in the twilight — to recline
In the cool shade of a fresh-bursting tree —
To look into the night, when from the sky
The moonlight broods upon the charmèd earth;
Yea, they have loved to take their playfellows

[1] *οὐ γάρ πω τοιοῦτον ἴδον βροτὸν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,*
οὔτ' ἄνδρ' οὔτε γυναῖκα· σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα.
Δήλῳ δὴ ποτε τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῷ
φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα.
Hom. Od. ζ.

From simple children, and to loose awhile
The rigid bands of hardship self-imposed:
And then they tell of youth, and innocence,
And for a little moment sunshine bursts
Upon their souls — a transitory gleam;
For soon the clouds roll onward thick and fast,
Darkening the light within, till a deep night
Sets in, a damp and freezing night, wherein
Prowl evil beasts, and most unbridled crime
Walks unreproved.

As one in summer-tide
Pacing a weary road in evening light
After the sun hath set, with the young moon
Looking upon him from the purple mist
That floats above the west, saddens to think
That each step bears him further from his love;
So in the interchange of daily words
With proud and heartless men, comes weariness
Upon my spirit, and my thoughts look back
To solitude, or sweet society
Of chosen souls, when two or three in peace
Gathered together, for a little hour
We held discourse in all humility
Of common dangers and of common hopes;
Till there came One among us who declared
Why all these things were so; till our hearts burned
Within us at the thoughts that flowed abroad
From one into the other; till we looked
And saw Him in the midst, as He had said,
Known in the feeding of our spirits: known
For that He blessed and brake as He was wont;

Known to be present in His messengers,
The daily calls and offices of life,
Which, like their Master, to the human kind
Go about doing good.

Despise not thou
The yearnings of a spirit ill at ease
To dwell with men that have no love for God —
Men of devices new and manifold —
Men who would disenshrine the heavenly crown
From the bright pole, and seek their best reward
In being catalogued with printed names,
And blazoning records of schismatic strife
In the far quarters of the world. O Love,
O Charity, that erst ascendant crowned
Our land with calm light like the star of eve!
Fast o'er the ocean fares the gathered gold,
Gathered from Britain's heart, while in her arms
Her famished myriads curse each coming morn;
And they who feed their thousands far away
By cold machinery that asks no toil,
Grudge the poor pittance of a laboring hour
To the home-duties of unwitnessed love.[1]

[2]Methinks I could have borne to live my days
When by the pathway side, and in the dells,

[1] This cannot now (1852) be said. The present time witnesses the noblest self-denying efforts on the part of our laity to reclaim the lost and relieve the needy. May they increase and prosper.

[2] 'If Mr. Alford, with the help of Mr. Wordsworth and Dr. Arnold, should succeed in restoring crosses by our road-sides, much good might follow, and no harm that we know of.' Thus wrote the Edinburgh Review in 1836. But all who

By shady resting-place, or hollow bank
Where curved the streamlet, or on peeping rock,
Rose sweetly to the traveller's humble eye
The Cross in every corner of our land;
When from the wooded valleys morn and eve
Passed the low murmur of the angel-bell;
Methinks I could have led a peaceful life
Daily beneath the triple-vaulted roof
Chanting glad matins, and amidst the glow
Of mellow evening towards the village-tower
Pacing my humble way; — most like to that
He in the spirit from the lonely isle
Saw, the beloved Apostle, round the throne
And Him that sat thereon, glad companies
Resting not day nor night their song of praise.

Go ye about and search — set up a place
And fetch a compass — in the brightest fields,
And by the dwelling of the mighty sea,
The everlasting witness; go and seek
The sweetest flower that ever bloomed on earth; —
See ye search well, for this our land hath borne
Full many a fragrant cluster — there hath come
From other times its sweet remembrance down; —
'Tis low, but ye may scent it from afar,
And ye may know its presence where it blooms,
Even in the faces of the men ye meet,
And in the little children. Many a quest

know the course of events in England since, will be aware that this whole matter has now assumed an entirely different aspect. The reader will be good enough to judge of these lines, written twenty years ago, by the light cast on them by subsequent history. Compare, also, Lesson V. line 90.

There hath been undertaken; many a man
Of tender spirit and soft step hath gone,
Lured on by specious promises, far forth,
And bitterly returned. We boast ourselves
In pride of art, and lift our heads on high,
Dangerously climbing, without care bestowed
To assure well the ground whereon is fixed
The ladder of our vaunting — where our sires
Laid deep and strong foundation, there we raise
Story on story vainly stretched aloft.
Celestial Meekness — purity of heart,
With all beloved and gentle memories
Of soul-refreshing things, up from the din
Of this most blasphemous and boasting age
Have taken flight into some purer air:
They have departed — never seek for them
In beautiful green places, or on slopes
Facing the west in any lovely land;
No sweet memorials of the sacrifice
By which man liveth, greet him on his way;
He walks in drear and dim disquietude,
Gathering no store for rest.

Eternal shame
Cleave to the mention of the men, whose hands
Pulled down from pathway-side and village-green
The holy emblem of our faith; whose trust
Lay not in truth, but power; to whom in vain
The word of caution was pronounced which bid
Take heed, lest with the tares ye sacrifice
Wheat also; doubly blind and faithless men,
Nursed in the gall of carnal bitterness,

Without one gentle spiritual thought;
Who in the end approved themselves to him
Who was their captain and their father, him
Who loves not order, hates all beautiful
And seemly things; when in their hour of dark
And devilish misrule, sceptre and crown —
The sacred types of firm and centred power,
Patterns of mighty things invisible —
Were trodden under foot of men; when full
On the calm face of Christ's own spouse, were blown
Pestilent slanders, and fell poisons poured
Into her holy cup.

They reasoned hard
Of so-deemed spiritual truths, and taught
The life of God to spend itself on words,
Objections, and divisions, and false depth
Of sentence intricate; they led the soul
Of human kind — already prone to ill,
But now, in course of wholesome discipline,
Trained to bow down to heaven-appointed rule,
And keep the harmony of God's great reign —
To break its bonds in sunder, and in pride
To feel its strength and self-entrusted power,
And tempt alone the perilous path of life,
Where once the saints, a meek and comely band,
Walked strong in union. Trust me, it is hard,
It is most hard for gentle souls to live,
And not to burst abroad with every woe,
When words and offices of heavenly love
Win not an answer in the heartless world;
When all our piety and all our zeal

Lie like a level swamp. Oh, slow the hearts,
And deaf the ears unto the voice of Heaven,
'*I came not to send Peace upon the earth!*'
True, we have tamed, or think that we have tamed
Outbreakings into blood; true, that the edge
Of persecuting sword is turned and dull;
The fierce depravity of human act
Roughs not our surface now; but with false care
Full deeply we have mixed our portion in,
Till the fell poison festers in all ranks,
And even the hearts we fold unto our breast
Are bitten, deadly bitten. Where is love?
Where is the blessed fold, that we may run
And shelter us? O God! they should have kept
A light upon the corners of thy fold,
To guide the wanderers in the desert wide:
But they have fought for words, and striven for names,
And fallen down dead among the famished sheep,
And round us howls the desolating wind,
And each the other knows not; there hath fallen
Darkness that may be felt upon our path;—
But Thou art just, and righteous are Thy ways;—
Where are the calm retreats our fathers gave
To holy meditation? Where the fanes
That rolled their tribute of unceasing praise
Up to the gates of heaven? And where the towers,
Thick rising o'er the twice-converted land,
Warning the peasant in his simple toil
With never-failing memories of God?
From their sad ruins and their crumbling shafts
Hath gone a cry to Heaven. Ere now, methinks,
This island-home of ours should have been spread

With mighty temples, morn nor solemn eve
Wanting the voice of prayer. Oh, I could weep
Even at the thought of ancient blessedness: ——
But we must pray and toil — the vengeance-cloud
Stoops tempest-laden on our godless land:
But we will forth, sweet love, and speak with God;
It may be we shall find a saving band
Of ten meek-hearted men; — blessed and wise,
Could we but win so many.

But the night
Falls down the heaven, and mists of silver dew
Strike chill upon the sense, and mournful thoughts
Come thick upon me, and the truant tears
Stand hot upon my cheek. Then cease we here,
And at some fitter time take up the lyre
In peaceful mood, and meditate sweet strains
For future years, of sorrow stayed on hope.

LESSON THE FOURTH.

Heaven-gates are not so highly arched
As princes' palaces ; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees.

WEBSTER. *Duchess of Malfi.*

A journey into regions whence a prospect is taken of the world ; into which is brought a view of the soul of man and its teaching, and a vision is related, with a prophecy, which Time hath proved to be true.

REMEMBEREST thou that solemn eventide
When last we parted? we had wandered forth
Down that steep hill-path to the level moor;
It was not long before the golden sun
Wheeled sloping to the western mountain's brink,
And presently a canopy of clouds
Folded him in with curtains of deep fire —
And so he sunk, slow and majestical,
Leaving a wake of glory; every bird
Sung his last carol, poised upon his branch
Of night-repose, and every little flower
Closed in its beauties in its drooping breast.

We sat upon the green marge of a stream
Reed-skirted, and the fragments of faint light
Leapt in and out among the yellow stalks,
Or peacefully reposed within the breast

Of the mid-river. Our discourse had been
Of infancy and youth: the hills of fern
And meadows of thick cowslips, floated past
Our mental vision, and a faint sweet smell
Seemed half to come upon some inward sense.
But we had ceased to speak, and on our ear
Dwelt the last words with oft-recurring sound,
Mingling most fitly with the distant fall,
And the low booming of the passing dorr.

I told thee, ere we parted home that night,
A thousand undistinguishable fears
Of heavy days to come; I mourned to see
Beauty and freedom — in the daily talk
Of men heard frequent, on the lips of all
A constant theme, undying sounds that set
The slumbering spirit of mankind on work —
That they were names alone; that the dull age
Knows not their presence passing daily by,
And seeks them where they dwell not; that we throw
Our dowry of sweet peace unto the winds;
That we have proudly sought and duly earned
A desolating curse from righteous Heaven.

Perchance thou art too young, and that smooth brow
Built upwards through thy gently-crisped hair,
Hath not those records stampt indelibly
Which Care, severe historian, writes aloft
That all may read; perchance the tender blue
So deep within thine eyes, is all too bright
And cloudless yet — perchance I spake of things
By thee unheeded. Purity and light,

Thy blessed chamber, thy beloved home,
Brothers and sisters, and in humbler life
Some chosen spirits of first thoughts and few,
These are thy helpmates; all thine outward world
Our wooded hills and thickly cottaged vales;
Thine inward nurture fetched from communings
With the great Comforter, in stillest hours,
And from the pages of that wondrous Book
Which deepens as we search, whence we may draw
Waters, that spring into eternal life.

As every day windeth its train along
Of sunny hours chequered with passing clouds,
We grow in spirit, and the holy work
Of God goes forward still. Each rising morn
Calls us from lightest slumbers to give thanks,
And every night we weave a wreath of praise
With sweeter blossoms of our rising Spring.
The holy leaven works, and all the lump
Ere long will penetrate: for all our life
Will speed as doth a dove upon the wing;
The day will seem no longer, when the sun
In age sets on us, than in this our morn
Seems the young dawning but an hour gone by.

Dear genius of my musings, let us now
Rise to the middle heaven, and thence look down
On the tossing waste of cares, and from the wall
Of Love's serenest temple, catch afar
The beatings of the fevered heart of the world.
Canst thou, bound to the chariot-path of God,
Traverse the dread circumference? Canst thou

Keep pace with the errant moon? or trace the star,
Night after night, that wanders over heaven?
Canst thou, the nursling of thy peaceful home,
Look without trembling down the dizzy height,
And see the flaming vapors rolled around
The journey of the day-god, and far off
Fringing the borders of the pendent world,
Dark cloudy heaps, that love to gather gloom
Even from the fields the sun hath sown with light?
Come, let us rise together: and as He
Whose raiment glistered on the wondrous Mount,
In sweetest converse with the Sons of Light,
Yet spoke of human pain, and that decease
He should accomplish at Jerusalem;
So take we into nearer sight of Heaven
Thoughts that are born of mortal suffering;
Thither ascending, where in open day
Of the full shining of God's countenance
Lie treasured all the secret sins of earth.

As one who wandering in the western land
Over a hill of golden-blossomed furze,
Amid grey rocks, where the red cup-moss grows,
Above the straggling fern, when now with toil
Of straining limbs he gains the beaconed top,
Looks over into valleys wonderful,
Thick-timbered valleys, with their fair church-towers,
Stretched into hazy distance, till a bank
Of bright blue hills with outline gently curved
Stands up before the sunset; so my soul
Hath gained a vantage-ground, and we can see
A stretch of airy prospect opening wide.

Dost thou not hear, beloved, how the air
Is trembling with the whisper of light wings?
These are the passengers that make their road
From God to men, and traffic in our hearts,
With cargoes of rich grace and help divine;
Repentant tears for nectar take they back,
Mourning for song—and there is joy in heaven.
Dost thou not see the underlying world
Clad with an outer zone of brooding light,
Whence inward ever sparkles leap and flash
Like the sea-spray beneath the evening star?
These are the tides of Hope, that daily fill
Life's river: thus it is decreed on high.
Because all light and gladness speeds away
Into the dark; and from the life of man
There floweth daily forth a stream of joy
Into a chasm whose depth we know not of;—
Therefore the soul doth day by day demand
Fresh food for strong desire; and therefore Hope,
Like ever-youthful Hebe to the throng
Of the immortals on Olympus' top,
Stands ministering, and from her golden cup
Deals sweetest potion to the thirsting soul.

It sorteth well with weakness to have need
To lean upon a stronger, and depend
Even for each step upon another's will:
It suiteth well with man's infirmity
To be linked fast with onward-looking hope,
And doubt, and strong desire; to see but part
Of all before it, and but now and then
Gain a bright glimpse of beauty; now and then

To feel a sprinkling of the pleasant spray
Of the great ocean-stream of truth, that laves
With living floods the walls of the city of life.

But wherefore doth infirmity still haunt
The mournful destinies of human kind?
Why, since the earth is full of beauty, lacks
Her best inhabitant in his best part
His rightful share apportioned? Why doth man,
Sole heir of misery, walk the happy earth,
Feeding on poisons, shut from perfect joy?

Because the beauties of this nether world
Are born, and live and die, and their reward
Is, that from them one particle of bliss
Makes way into the life of higher things,
Nourishing that whence nourishment may flow
Up to the soul of man, the holy place
Of this great natural temple. The small flower
That was our favorite in the happy years
Of childhood, in each scheme of riper days
Hath borne its part; but it hath long ago
Passed into earth and laid its beauty by:
And some that seem eternal — the dark hills
And thickly-timbered valleys, the great sea,
The never-changing watchers of the sky,
Are daily testimonies, by whose word
Speaks the great Spirit to the soul of man.
So that their place is finally assigned
In universal being, and their rank
Defined, and to what end they minister,
And to that end how far.

But who shall set
Definite limits to the human soul,
Or bound the mighty yearnings of desire
Wherewith the spirit labors after truth?
All natural teaching — all the thoughts that owe
Their being to the multitude of things
Which crowd upon us daily from without,
Go forward without labor — and when spurred
By call for mightier energies, the soul
Summons its hidden forces, and springs up
Mail-clad in most unvanquishable might,
A bright aspirant to a higher meed
Of beauty and desire: thence to look up
To some yet loftier spiritual throne.
Because the heart of man is capable
Of all degrees of purity and power;
Because the purest heart is mightiest
For strife with evil; therefore is the life
Of man encompassed with infirmity;
And therefore to the kingdom of our God
Much tribulation is the beaten path.

Shall miserable Man, the sport of winds
And the keen breath of the eager winter air,
Think condescension to bow down in woe,
To court his brother dust, and lift his cries,
Wafting against the thunder-thrones of Heaven,
The incense of his wailings? Not that power
Is thereby sacrificed, or human souls
Lose aught of marvellous splendor; — know ye not
That he who kneels is higher than who stands?
The prostrate than the upright — the opprest

Than the oppressor — how more heavenly light
Breaks in upon the spirit through distress?
The reed that waves along the river's brink,
Spearing its way into the summer air,
Is not so glorious, as when laid by winds
It rests upon the mirror of the flood,
Gemmed with bright globes of dew; the stream that winds
Through unopposing flats its teeming way,
Floated with merchandise to the broad sea,
We love not like the tumbling mountain linn,
That hath not where to flow, breaking its path
Through fragments rough, and over mossy crags,
Down to the headlong cliff that tops the waves.

Hast thou not marked, how close together linked
Glory and Sadness walk — how never flower
Were half so beautiful, did we not know
That it must droop and wither? deem not then
That all the anguish-cries of this great world
Which reach us where we stand, find not in heaven
Fit greeting; there are those who minister
Outside the golden gates, to purify
The sorrow and the joy that enters there;
And I have heard from that bright visitant
Who comes to me each night, when my small flock
Is folded safe, by wearied Nature left
To the great Shepherd who can never sleep,
That oftentimes the pale and weeping souls
Dazzle them as they pass to meet their Lord
In glittering frost-robes of the purest spar
Circled with many crowns; and oftentimes

One who was joyous all, and in the world
Shone like a star, comes drooping in a mist,
And falters at the steep and narrow stair;
Nor enters, till with sprinkling and with words
The shadow of the earthy melt away.

Hear thou a vision — fitly told thee now
When we are parted from the nether world,
A dream of import strange, and prophecy
Which after-time shall prove. 'Twas on a night
Such as my spirit loves — moonlit and calm,
But veiled with amber mist, wherein there dwelt
Light, clothing equally the arch of heaven.
I had flown upwards on the stripping wings
Of meditation through the ample sky;
By the Queen-crescent, and past many a star
Thronged with unsinning shapes, whose atmosphere
Made clearer shining round me as I fled,
Reluctantly bound onward through the vast
And peopled universe: and now a light
Fell on me as from some self-shining tract,
Broad and uncentred, and I felt my thoughts
Grew pure and wonderful, and even this flesh
Into a glorious temple purified,
For such a saintly soul as now it shrined
Not all unfitting. And methought in sight
Full opposite, a beautiful green land,
In light not clear nor dark; a mellow day
Shed its soft influence over hill and dale,
And tenderest foliage down a hundred dells
Spread over paths that wound beside the bed
Of tinkling streamlets. Thickly scattered stood

Elm-shaded cottages, and wreathèd smoke
In bright blue curls went up, and o'er the vales
That lay toward the waves, slept peacefully.
'T was such a land as summer travellers see
On Britain's western shores, who from the hills
Painfully climbed, beyond the Severn sea
Look over into Cambria, facing south,
To Aberavon, by the stream of Taff,
And old Glamorgan. — Then my fancy changed;
'T was the third morning since my angel-guide
Landed me from strange voyage; scarcely yet
The search of this new home had given repose
To my way-wearied eyes. Thou canst not tell
How bright a morn it was; never such sun
Looked on the nether earth, as now above
Heaven's everlasting hills with perfect orb
Rose joyous, and from every brake the birds
Under the thick leaves starred with prisms of dew
Crowded their mellow warbles. Shapes in white
Over the lawns and by the hedge-row sides
Moved glorious; all the breathings of the air
Were full of joy, and every passing sound
Thrilled through me like the touch of her I love.
And on a sudden from an upland copse
Tangled with woodbine and lithe virgin-bower,
Broke forth a river of full melody,
Gushing like some long reach of pouring linn
In underlying valley, when the stars
Are out upon the mountain. Mute I turned
And listened, till the music of that voice
So took my senses captive, that I stood
Emptied of thought and human consciousness;

Like her who from the sulphur-steaming vale
Hurrying away in olden time, looked back
On Admah and Zeboim, and the plain
Of fruitful Sodom lately loved, and there,
As in her fondness she had looked, stood fixed.
'Hither,' it said, 'come hither, child of earth,
Curb thy wild leapings of unquiet thought,
And glide into the calm of hope fulfilled.
Here is no sport of words, nor lying smile
Of rash undowried promise; hither come,
And I will show thee blest realities
More bright than earthly dreams.' As by a charm
Led on, I followed, through the scented air
Moving with speed of thought, till in a shade
Most like to that, where in the morn of life
I opened forth to thee mine inner heart
When thou hadst picked thine apron full of flowers,—
I saw an angel form, serene and tall,
Far lifted into blessedness of look
Above our mortal state; and yet methought
I knew her eyes, her cast of shape,
As when we see a new-acquainted face
Fixed on us strangely with accustomed looks.
'Draw near,' she said, in that same wondrous voice
That filled the air of heaven, heard nigher now,
Like some clear organ, when the swell of song
Tempers the long-drawn music; 'let me look
Into thy face, and read thine open soul,
For blessed angels see not as ye see
Down on the nether earth; each fleeting spark
Of high desire, and each conception bold
Of worthy daring, to the insight keen

Of heavenly spirits hath its proper form
And presence, as to thee its earthly veil :' —
And as she spoke, a flush of sudden love,
Like shade athwart a sunny upland thrown,
Passed on her cheek — 'dear child, the child of tears,
Thou didst not know me; scarcely had thy face
Learned to acknowledge with uncertain calm
(Which mother-love would fain hear called a smile)
My careful ministrations, when a voice
Mysterious called, first softly and scarce heard,
Then loud and louder waxing — 'Come away' —
Till the dread sound struck on my throbbing brain,
And I was carried from thee. Ever since
In the pure summer air of this sweet land
God hath been ripening for enjoyment high
My patient spirit; but thine earthly speech
Hath not the signs that might disclose to thee
By what enlightening what blessed sight
These eyes have gained; or how the faithful sense,
Close-leaguing with the soul, searches unchecked
Things that lie hid beyond the visible blue
And past the flickering stars.

'But thou mayest know
Thus far, that there are many globes, as this
Hung in the middle firmament, where dwell
Pure spirits, ruling or obeying each
The gentle course of those their shining homes,
Or resting after lives of over-toil,
Or from the sources, at whose distant streams
They loved to drink on earth, feeding at will
Their ever-new desire; some by the flood

That girds the city of God, hold communing
With those that pass, or muse along the brink,
Or cull the lavish flowers; some that love best
To dwell in conflict, on the verge extreme
Sit of this tract of heaven, where night and day
The various plunging of the chafèd sea
Doth homage to their restless thirst of change.

'This isle of ours (to which I marvel how
Thy steps have come) its own inhabitants
Hath portioned, a blest tribe, who love the calm,
And tend these mystic plants, and night and morn
(For night and morn we mark as on the earth,
Though not with setting or returning light,
But with alternate song, and visits new
Of blessed ones from God) for worship meet,
Drawing the lengthened chant, and marrying
The raptures of Earth's sweetest melodies
To pure assurance of untroubled souls.
Thou sawest, if thy way I right divine
To have lain upward, for thou art not yet
As one of us, and shalt return to earth,
Where many valleys meet, a gulf of air,
Quiet, and full of this our ether-light;
Call this 'the Haven of Lost Hope' — for here
Speed all the holy souls who left the world
While Hope was young, and Promise in her bud; —
Hither they sped, and wait, till there shall sound
A call to higher meed of blessedness,
The second in Heaven's roll, (if we may trust
The songs of the bright quires that hover round,)
Next to the sainted ones, that fought the fight

Against the sword, or fire, or piercing scorn,
Enduring unto death. If truly rise
Thoughts on my spirit (and responses false
Have seldom place in temples purified),
Thou to this island after certain days
Shalt send a blest inhabitant, thyself,
Or other, from the chambers of thine heart
Unwilling parted, friend of hopes and fears.[1]
Weep not,'— for one large tear, born first of joy,
And fully ripened by a throe of grief,
Rolled on my cheek,—'Weep not, for ill thou knowest
That earthly hope is like the precious ore
Rough and unseemly, till unwelcome force
Crush it in sunder, and the glittering wreck
Refine with fire, till its calm shining face
Give back the unbroken sky. Thou canst not tell
How rich a dowry Sorrow gives the soul,
How firm a faith, and eagle-sight of God.
So mayest thou see upon the Earth at night,
After a day of storms, whose sun hath set
In sorrow, when the horizontal round
Is hemmed by sullen clouds, there opens forth
High in the zenith a clear space, in which,
As in a gulf embayed, broods quietly
The glory of the Moon, from underneath
Her misty veil sent upwards; and the stars
Far up the avenues of light disclose.'

[1] These lines were written in 1834. On Aug. 31, 1850, Ambrose Oke Alford, the author's only surviving son, was taken from him almost suddenly in the midst of a joyous and hopeful boyhood. Some slight memorials of him will be found in the poems entitled Lacrymæ Paternæ.

She ceased to speak — and aught of joy or fear
That might be left me from that voice divine
Not long was present; for along the shade
A troop of blessed children sporting past —
Oft have I mused ere now on ancient gems,
And sculptured forms of godlike symmetry,
And grace of pictured limbs; but never yet
Saw I such beauty, nor in song attained
So fair conceit, as now in light of Love
Shone in my sight these little ones of Heaven.
Naked they were, if that were nakedness
Which clothed the spirit pure with glorious veil,
The richest dress of God's own fashioning;
With perfect liberty and sport of limb
They gambolled by us on the summer turf,
Each chasing other, and in meetings fond
Twining their innocent arms, and snatching oft
Kisses of playful love; and then they stood
As children might have stood if children were
In the first Paradise, arm over arm,
Clad with a crimson glow, listening our talk,
Their little breasts panting with joy and play.
For there had flowed afresh from that sweet fount
Words of high import, and oft questioning
I dwelt upon her lips; and thus had stayed
Contented ever, but the light began
Slowly to wane around me, and her form
Dimmer and dimmer grew, her voice more faint,
Her answers rare and short; — the sporting band
Of holy children last remained in sight,
And parted last; and all around me then
Was darkness, till our grange and humble Church,

And row of limes that eastward fence our home,
Now visible against the waking dawn,
Came slowly into presence, and this Earth
Flowed in, and loosed the avenues of sense.

LESSON THE FIFTH.

——— 'Churchyards are our cities, unto which
The most repair, that are in goodness rich.
There is the best concourse and confluence,
There the holy suburbs, and from thence
Begins God's city, New Jerusalem,
Which doth extend her utmost gates to them:
At that gate then, triumphant soul, dost thou
Begin thy triumph.' DONNE.

By a pilgrimage to a village churchyard, occasion is taken to speak of death; its wonderful and deep things, and some few of its records, not triumphs.

FROM the great sun light flows upon the earth;
And every thing that lives this summer morn
Looks joyous; all along the hills that stretch
Far southward, slowly sail the dazzling heaps
Of whitest vapor; but the upper heaven
Is deep and clear; — above the yellow fields,
Some thick with grain, and some with pointed sheaves
Spread as with tents, and some but yesterday
Joyed over with loud shouts of harvest joy,
The dizzy air swims onward: — in thick groups
Over the slopes, and in the cottaged dells,
Gathered in undistinguishable mass
Of dark luxuriance, elm, and solemn oak,
And tender ash, sleep in the lavish light.

Come, let us forth, my best beloved, and roam
Along the bowered lanes that thread the vales;
For on the bank beneath the arching shade
Hang purple strawberries, and interchange
Of leafy arbor, and field-path, and hill,
And the far sea, and undying dells,
Will prompt sweet themes of never-failing talk.

Oft have I seen, when on the mighty hills
That curve around our bay, in a close nook
Upon the westward slope, a village tower:[1]
And I have stood and gazed upon its top
That looks above the trees, and thought my life
Would pass full pleasantly beneath its crest;
So quiet is it, so without pretence
Most lovely, that the throng of restless hopes
That ever leap unquiet in the soul
Might well be charmed, in such a presence, down
To sweet contentment — and the mellowed voice
Of the past hour hath come upon my ear
So sweetly, that I waited where I stood
To hear its sound again, rather than risk
Echoes less gentle on a near approach.
Bend we our journey thither — for the day
Is all our own, for ramble or for talk,
Or seat by the cool mountain stream, or hour
Of meditation by that modest church;
For, if I guess aright, there should be there
Ancient stone monument of honest men,
Or mouldering cross; and from that arbored nook

[1] Selworthy, Somerset.

Yon hills will show most proudly. 'T is not far:
Thou art a denizen of mountain air;
And the fresh breezes from the sea will fan
Our brows as we mount upward.

Gentlest Girl,
Thou wert a bright creation of my thought
In earliest childhood — and my seeking soul
Wandered ill-satisfied, till one blest day
Thine image passed athwart it — thou wert then
A young and happy child, sprightly as life;
Yet not so bright or beautiful as that
Mine inward vision: — but a whispering voice
Said softly — This is she whom thou didst choose;
And thenceforth ever, through the morn of life,
Thou wert my playmate — thou my only joy,
Thou my chief sorrow when I saw thee not: —
And when my daily consciousness of life
Was born and died — thy name the last went up,
Thy name the first, before our Heavenly Guide,
For favor and protection. All the flowers
Whose buds I cherished, and in summer heats
Fed with mock showers, and proudly showed their bloom,
For thee I reared, because all beautiful
And gentle things reminded me of thee:
Yea, and the morning, and the rise of sun,
And fall of evening, and the starry host,
If aught I loved, I loved because thy name
Sounded about me when I looked on them.
So that the love of thee brought up my soul
To universal love; and I have learned

That there are voices in the silent earth
That speak unto the heart; that there is power
Granted from Heaven unto the humblest things; —
And that not he who strives to gather up
Into his self-arranged and stubborn thoughts
The parables of Nature, meets with joy;
But he who patiently submits his soul
To God's unwritten teaching — who goes forth
Amidst the majesty of earth and sky
Humble, as in a mighty Presence, waits
For influence to descend; and murmurs not
If in his present consciousness no trace
Of admiration or of lofty thought
Be shown — in patience tarrying the full time,
Till the Beauty that hath passed into his soul
Shine out upon his thoughts.

Therefore I love
All calm and silent things — all things that bear
Least show of motion or unnatural force; —
Therefore I love to mark the slow decay
Of ancient building, or of churchyard cross,
Or mouldering abbey — and as formerly
I mourned when I remembered how of old,
Where crumbling arches ivy-prop their shafts,
The proud aisle stood, and the full choir of praise
Rolled solemn from an hundred tongues; — so now
I seem to see that mighty Providence
Is justified; that more hath been revealed
On which the human soul hath lived and grown
In the departure of old glories — more
In cherished memories that keep at home

Within our breasts, than in the maintenance
Of busy action, which hath wrought their charm.

But we are drawing near — this bowered lane,
With glimpses of the southern bank of hills,
And ever through the bents the blessed sea
Far to the west, might stir a heavier heart
Than thine and mine to leap with childish joy.
Thanks to the arching boughs for stir of breeze
Scarce sensible but in their rustling leaves,
Yet even thus most cooling; thanks for shade
Dark and continuous as we further climb,
Like magic corridor deep down in earth,
Thickening to perfect black; whence, in the glare
Of sickly noon upon the autumn fields,
I have scared night-birds, and have watched the bat
Pass and repass alternate. How the sense
Hails the dense gloom, and hastens to the cool: —
Now rest thee here, where scarce the sun may see
Our pleasant refuge; where we scarce can tell
There is an outward universe, so close
And hallowed is the shade; save where, through length
Of dark perspective, yonder shine a group
Of sunny tombstones, and one window-pane,
Lit with the noon, is glittering like a star
Down even unto us.

I heard one say, —
It was an aged dame, whose humble cot
Fronted our churchyard wall, — she loved to look
When from the windows of the hallowed pile
The sunbeam came reflected; she could think

Fondly, she said, that there were those within
Whose robes were shining, thronging the deep aisles,
And the promised glory of the latter house
Would crowd upon her vision.

Think we thus:
And in yon vista of uncertain light
If we behold in fancy this our life
Chequered with dark and bright, and at its head
The emblem of our end — let yonder gleam
Tell us of glory fetched by angel-hands
To spread upon us: be to us a spark
Lit at the altar of the Holy One,
Over the majesty of patient Death
Hovering, and waiting its appointed time
To kindle all to life.

But fabling thus
I've led thee from thy rest; and now at once
Opens upon our sight a goodly range
Of fretted buttresses, and the low porch
Invites us, with its antique seat of stone,
And cool religious shade. But as we climb
The churchyard steps, look back and see arise
As if in show, far o'er the bowering leaves,
The southern mountains — see o'er half the sky
Spread out, a mixture wild of hill and cloud.

Stand by me here, beloved, where thick crowd
On either side the path the headstones white:
How wonderful is Death — how passing thought
That nearer than yon glorious group of hills,

Ay, but a scanty foot or two beneath
This pleasant sunny mound, corruption teems; —
And that one sight of that which is so near
Could turn the current of our joyful thoughts,
Which now not e'en disturbs them.

See this stone,
Not, like the rest, full of the dazzling noon,
But sober brown — round which the ivy twines
Its searching tendril, and the yew-tree shade
Just covers the short grave. He mourned not ill
Who graved the simple plate without a name:

'This grave's a cradle, where an infant lyes,
Rockt fast asleepe with Death's sad lullabyes.'

And yet methinks he did not care to wrong
The Genius of the place, when he wrote 'sad:'
The chime of hourly clock, — the mountain-stream
That sends up ever to thy resting-place
Its gush of many voices — and the crow
Of matin cock, faint it may be but shrill,
From elm-embosomed farms among the dells, —
These, little slumberer, are thy lullabyes:
Who would not sleep a sweet and peaceful sleep
Thus husht and sung to with all pleasant sounds?

And I can stand beside thy cradle, child,
And see yon belt of clouds in silent pomp
Midway the mountain sailing slowly on,
Whose beaconed top peers over on the vale; —
And upward narrowing in thick-timbered dells
Dark solemn coombs, with wooded buttresses

Propping his mighty weight — each with its stream,
Now leaping sportfully from crag to crag,
Now smoothed in clear black pools — then in the vales,
Through lanes of bowering foliage glittering on,
By cots and farms and quiet villages
And meadows' brightest green. Who would not sleep
Rocked in so fair a cradle?

But that word,
That one word — 'Death,' comes over my sick brain,
Wrapping my vision in a sudden swoon;
Blotting the gorgeous pomp of sun and shade,
Mountain, and wooded cliff, and sparkling stream,
In a thick dazzling darkness. — Who art thou
Under this hillock on the mountain-side?
I love the like of thee with a deep love,
And therefore called thee dear — thee who art now
A handful of dull earth. No lullabyes
Hearest thou now, be they or sweet or sad —
Not revelry of streams, nor pomp of clouds,
Not the blue top of mountain — nor the woods
That clothe the steeps, have any joy for thee.

Go to, then — tell me not of balmiest rest
In fairest cradle — for I never felt
One half so keenly as I feel it now,
That not the promise of the sweetest sleep
Can make me smile on Death. Our days and years
Pass onward — and the mighty of old time
Have put their glory by, and laid them down
Undrest of all the attributes they wore,
In the dark sepulchre: strange preference,

To fly from beds of down and softest strains
Of timbrel and of pipe, to the cold earth,
The silent chamber of unknown decay;
To yield the delicate flesh, so loved of late,
By the informing spirit, to the maw
Of unrelenting waste; to go abroad
From the sweet prison of this moulded clay,
Into the pathless air, among the vast
And unnamed multitude of trembling stars;
Strange journey, to attempt the void unknown
From whence no news returns; and cast the freight
Of nicely treasured life at once away.

Come, let us talk of Death — and sweetly play
With his black locks, and listen for a while
To the lone music of the passing wind
In the rank grass that waves above his bed.

Is it not wonderful, the darkest day
Of all the days of life — the hardest wrench
That tries the coward sense, should mix itself
In all our gentlest and most joyous moods
A not unwelcome visitant — that Thought,
In her quaint wanderings, may not reach a spot
Of lavish beauty, but the spectre form
Meets her with greeting, and she gives herself
To his mysterious converse? I have roamed
Through many mazes of unregistered
And undetermined fancy; and I know
That when the air grows balmy to my feel,
And rarer light falls on me, and sweet sounds
Dance tremulously round my captive ears,

I soon shall stumble on some mounded grave;
And ever of the thoughts that stay with me,
(There are that flit away) the pleasantest
Is hand in hand with Death: and my bright hopes,
Like the strange colors of divided light,
Fade into pale uncertain violet
About some hallowed precinct. Can it be
That there are blessed memories joined with Death,
Of those who parted peacefully, and words
That cling about our hearts, uttered between
The day and darkness, in Life's twilight time? —
Oh, I could tell of one whose image comes
Before my inner sight — I knew her not —
That ancient dame I told thee of, whose eyes
Sought for Heaven's glories in the light of Earth,
She would speak of her, till her heart was full,
And I would weep for childish waywardness,
And long to be as she was. 'T was her own
And only child; and never from her side
Long years, she said, had parted her; in joy
And beauty she grew up, ever her sire
Gladdening with smiles, and laying on his heart
Ointment of purest comfort. On a day
Heaven sent a worm into this summer flower.
She told me how they watched her fade away,
As we have watched the clouds of evening fade
After the sun hath set. Slow were her words,
And solemn, as she reached the parting tale:
'T was thus we sat and saw our only hope
Go down into the grave; for many months
It was a weary weary life to lead:
She weakened by degrees; and every day

Less light was in her eye, and on her cheek
Less color; and the faint quick pulse that beat
In the blue veins that laced her marble wrist
Stole without notice on the wary touch.
Sometimes by day she asked if it were fair,
By night if it were starlight; that was all.
Ye should have seen her but a night and day
Before she died, how she sat up and spoke,
How of a sudden light most wonderful
Looked forward from her eyes, and on her cheek
Flushed color, like a bloom from other lands,
The bloom that shows in flowers beyond the skies.
And then the words came forth most musical,
Low-toned and solemn, like the final notes
Of that grand anthem whose last strain is '*Peace.*'[1]
She spoke of angels, seen in a half-light;
She spoke of friends, long-severed friends, that died
In early youth, some fair and tall, and some
Most innocent children, that with earnest gaze
Looked ever in upon her all the night,
And faded slow into the light of morn.
And so she passed away; and now her grave
Ten summers and ten winters hath been green;
We dug it in a still and shady place;
There is no headstone; for we deemed it vain
To carve her record in a mouldering slab,
Whose name is written in the Book of Life.'

I am not one whose pleasure is to weave
Tales highly wrought of sudden accident,

[1] The 'Gloria in Excelsis' of Pergolesi.

Unlooked-for recognition, or desire
Strangely fulfilled; but yet I have a tale
Which will bring tears of pity to thine eyes,
And summon all thy sadness to attend
A willing mourner in a funeral train.
Within our hilly bay,[1] hard by the beach,
Dwelt one whose nightly service was to watch
All deeds of outlaws on the Channel trade.
Him on the cliff-side pathways we might see
Early and late, and meet in the dusk eve
Up the steep tracks, threading the oaken copse
That delves into the sea. One summer morn,
When the bright sun looked down upon the earth
Without a cloud, and all along the shore
Twinkled the restless sparkles, he rode by,
And passing offered salutation gay,
As one who in the beauty and the warmth
Of that most blessed morning bore a part.
That day we wandered, my dear friend and I,
Far off along the hills, up perilous paths
Gathering the rock-plants, or with hollowed hand
Scooping the streams that trickled down the dells:
Till from a peak we saw the fiery sun
Sink down into the sea, and twilight fell;
And ere we reached our cot, the distant lights
Shone from the Cambrian coast, and from the isle
Unseen in the mid-channel. From his cot
There looked into the bosom of the bay
A steady light — and when we reached our home

[1] The Bay of Porlock. The incident here recorded happened in the summer of 1833.

We slept and thought not of him. In the morn
Rumor was busy — and her minister,
Our bustling hostess, told how all the night
His anxious bride (for one short month ago
They gave their troths) had watched for his return;
How there came by a stranger with his horse,
Who answered not, when breathless she inquired
Where he was left, and why. Many with search
Hopeless and wearisome toiled all the day;
And when the evening came, upon the beach
Below that awful steep where winds the road
Cut in the mountain-side above the sea,
They found a cold and melancholy corpse
With outstretched arms and strangely-gathered limbs,
Like one who died in sudden and sharp pain;
And deeply gashed on either side the brow
The gaping death-marks of a cruel fall.
Thou wouldst have wept to see her as she past
To snatch her scanty comfort of a look,
And then to see him, warm but now and gay,
And full of soft endearments, hidden deep
In the cold ground: — it was a blank still face,
But bearing trace of tears, and ashy pale,
Stiffened to stone by strong and sudden grief.
Her little stock of hopes, just anchored safe
In a calm port, were sent adrift again
Upon the howling wintry sea of life:
And she is fain to gather up afresh
The cast-off weeds of past prosperity,
And deck her as she may. But a sad rent
Hath sorrow made in her: nor can she now
Knit up her ravelled hopes, nor summon heart

To enter on Life's journey all alone,
A new and weary way. But time will come
When memory of her woe shall be to her
A sweet companion — Sorrow shall have past
Into her being, and have chastened well
The lawless risings of unquiet thought.

Nearer this tale hath carried me to think
Of mine own grief: should I not weary thee
With record of affliction, I would dwell
On playful hopes too pitilessly crushed,
And voices that made glad my soul erewhile,
Quenched in cold earth — coming like saddened bells
Far off and faint beneath the muffling clay.
[1] But one there was that left me, whose fresh loss
Time, nor the changeful world, hath never healed.
I am not skilled with robe of artful verse
To cheat the destitution of deep woe:
Sorrow and I in the sunny days of youth
Have been but rare companions; I have loved
Rather in Beauty's temple ministrant
To treasure up sweet music, and enshrine
Thee, the bright Saint of my best holyday,
In some deep-fretted niche of Poesy;
But those short tidings reached me — and my heart
Was sorely stricken, and the bitter springs
Were broken up within me.

[1] The following lines are a humble tribute to the cherished memory of Arthur Henry Hallam, the wonder and delight of all who knew him. A far nobler monument has lately been raised to him in the 'In Memoriam' of Alfred Tennyson.

Gentle soul,
That ever moved among us in a veil
Of heavenly lustre; in whose presence, thoughts
Of common import shone with light divine;
Whence we drew sweetness, as from out a well
Of honey, pure and deep; thine earthly form
Was not the investiture of daily men;
But thou didst wear a glory in thy look,
From inward converse with the Spirit of Love.
And thou hadst won in the first strife of youth
Trophies that gladdened hope, and pointed on
To days when we should stand and minister
At the full triumphs of thy gathered strength.

The twain were rent asunder in an hour
Of which we knew not; and the face we loved
With common earth is mingled; but the Soul
Drinks deep of Beauty, and in vision clear
Searches the glorious features from whose light
Flows every joy that shines on us below.

It was a question wonderful and deep,
'Who knoweth if to live be but to die,
And Death be Life?'[1] In an unblessed time
It passed from one whose lips were passages
For sweetest music, whose unwearied soul
Dwelt among human griefs; who loved to find
The wrecks of Joy and faded flowers of Hope.
Since have the wide Earth and the arch of Heaven

[1] τίς οἶδεν, εἰ τὸ ζῆν μέν ἐστι κατθανεῖν,
τὸ κατθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν; EURIPIDES.

Rung with blest answer; — and all Poesy,
And dreams of holy men, and crystal tears
Of the grave-circling mourners, have been blent
With light of Promise that can never fade.

'T was the faint dawn; and from the waking Earth
Soft prayers were rising to the gate of Heaven;
The busy lark had been before, and sung
Floating in middle air, whether she love
To swell the incense of the offering Earth,
Or to be first of all created things
To give glad welcome to the peering Morn.
In old Verona sweetly slept the while
That Bard of blessed soul,[1] to whom pure dreams
Ministered ever, and sweet strains of song
Lulled him the night-hours through.
Stole not so softly now the slow-paced light
Into that chamber dim, as moved before
His sight the vision of his Laura's form;
All still and heavenly, and her lustrous eyes
Quietly bent upon him, angel-mild,
Not in the restlessness of earthly love, —
Most like (but more serene) the look of one
Who hath drunk deep of woe, and rests in faith.
They had been severed long — meeting like this
Might seem to warrant question. She replied,
(Thou can'st not tell, love, how she said those words,
But thou hast heard those sweetest notes of all,
Prest from the rapturous breast of nightingale,
That have their airy dwelling here and there

[1] Petrarca.

Circling thee where thou standest in the gloom,)
'I live, beloved; but 'tis thou art dead;
Time is when thou shalt live.'

See how the light
Dwells on yon mountain-side — marking each dell
And every buttress of the velvet turf,
So that we see the ribbed shadows stretch
Lengthened, as by the westering sun, along
This northward slope — and yet the day is high:
But turn we homeward — and that favored hill
That overlooks our bay, reach, when the sun
Dips in the ocean brim. We may not lose,
After a day all consecrate as this,
The holy influence which on human souls
Flows from the sunset. Life and earthly things,
And calls importunate for daily toil,
Grant not such respite often as this day
We two have freely shared. Thankfully rise,
Dear Sister of my heart, from thy low seat,
Thankfully rise, and softly move away —
Move like a dream; for all around us hangs
The balanced calm of hills and arching sky,
And the solemn sleep of Death; one startling word
Breaks the fair spell for ever.

Pass we hence;
And as that reverend Priest of Poesy,[1]
Whose presence shines upon these twilight times,
Hath, in THE CHURCHYARD IN THE MOUNTAINS, done

[1] William Wordsworth.

One sacrifice whose scent shall fill the world,
So shall this hour be fresh in memory,
A time to speak of in our thankful prayers,
If hallowed light of universal love
Each rising thought have steeped, and there have passed
Into our spoken words, aught that may teach
To the world's restless heart the bliss of calm,
The heavenly joy of well-assured Hope,
And the strong searchings of the soul for God.

LESSON THE SIXTH.

'Now, to withdraw my pen,'
And now a while to rest,
Me semeth it for the beste.
The fore castel of my ship
Shal glide and smothely slip
Out of the waves wode
Of the stormye floude :
Shote anker, and lye at rode,
And sayle not farre a brode,
Till the cooste be clere
That the lode starre appere :
My shyp now will I pere
Toward the port salu
Of our Saviour Jesu.'

SKELTON.

The strain is changed, and the song is of the day of triumph ; of the beauty and glory of earth as they minister to that day : of the yearnings of Man's heart for it : of the high blessedness of that day of all joy. The end, and a promise of more.

EREWHILE of Death and human suffering
Spoke we, and lingered, as in some dark wood
The pilgrim lingers ere he dare approach
The golden shrine, where on his sight shall break
Light of pure grace from Heaven ; — the end of toil
Is near — and through the trembling intervals
Of over-arching boughs, rich pinnacles
Spire up into the sky — the music deep
Of prayer-inviting bells fills all the air,

No longer heard in fitful swells and falls,
Over far fields and waters, but poured forth
As if the voice of the cathedral pile
From tower and transept, and the thousand forms
Of sculptured saints and angels, sent at once
Its hymn of holy rapture up to God.

As[1] when the stars in heaven around the moon
Show brightly, and the under air is calm,
All headland tops and beacon-towers, and steeps,
Are clothed with visible light, and from above
The glory of the boundless firmament
Flows downward, and the heavenly host is seen,
The heart of him that watches by the fold
Swells in his breast for joy; so riseth now
My laboring bosom, and the choking tears
Are thronging on my voice for very joy
At prospect of the inner life divine.

Light from afar — the night is well-nigh spent,
The day at hand; no more of earthly woe,
Of conflict now no more; — the laver pure
Of new Baptismal innocence, the Ark
That bears us through the flood which fell for sin,
And lands us in the country far away,
All love, all knowledge of divinest lore

[1] ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην
φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ,
ἔκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαί, καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι,
καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ' ἀρ' ὑπερρήγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,
πάντα δέ τ' εἴδεται ἄστρα, γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν.
Hom. *Il.* θ.

Regained — the pathway shining like the light
That shineth ever to the perfect day, —
These be our converse now; you solemn Church,
The sanctuary of Earth, with its flushed tower,
Is full in view — and we are here in peace
With the sunset falling round us, by our hearth;
Meet time for talk of mystic truths and high,
Best pondered on, when every fleeting thing
Is shut from our observance, and the sight
From outward lures turns inward on the soul.
And thou art with me, who hast ever been
The spirit of my song — no longer now
Half-known, untried, a theme of restless thought,
By self-distrusting fondness glorified;
But tried and known, approved and manifest,
Partaker of a thousand wakeful thoughts,
And cares of daily love.

The April moon,
When she looks over thickets fresh in green,
Whose young leaves tremble in her golden light,
Tempereth not with such a peaceful charm
The rapturous gush of bowered nightingale,
As doth thy quiet look my struggling thoughts;
Nor, if I guess aright, doth the full song
Of the night-warbler with more life endow
The slumbering moonlight, than these tuneful words
Thy patient spirit, rapt in holy calm
Of contemplation, married to desire,
Wandering or resting as affection leads.

We have been dwellers in a lovely land,

A land of lavish lights and floating shades,
And broad green flats, bordered by woody capes
That lessen ever as they stretch away
Into the distance blue; a land of hills,
Cloud-gathering ranges, on whose ancient breast
The morning mists repose; each autumn tide
Deep purple with the heath-bloom; from whose brow
We might behold the crimson sun go down
Behind the barrier of the western sea;
A land of beautiful and stately fanes,
Aërial temples most magnificent,
Rising with clusters of rich pinnacles
And fretted battlements; a land of towers
Where sleeps the music of deep-voiced bells,
Save when in holyday time the joyous air
Ebbs to the welling sound; and Sabbath morn,
When from a choir of hill-side villages
The peaceful invitation churchward chimes.[1]
So were our souls brought up to love this Earth
And feed on natural beauty: and the light
Of our own sunsets, and the mountains blue
That girt around our home, were very parts
Of our young being; linked with all we knew,
Centres of interest for undying thoughts
And themes of mindful converse. Happy they
Who in the fresh and dawning time of youth
Have dwelt in such a land, tuning their souls
To the deep melodies of Nature's laws
Heard in the after-time of riper thought
Reflective on past seasons of delight.

[1] The western division of the county of Somerset, bordering on Devonshire.

But what is Beauty? why doth human art
Strive ever to attain similitude
With some bright idol of creative mind?
Why do the trembling stars, and mighty hills,
And forms of moving grace, and the deep fire
Of tender eyes, and gloom, and setting suns,
All feed in turn one unfulfilled desire?

Deep theme is this for youthful lovers' thought;
And fittest dwelt on when thy presence sheds
Sweet Peace around me; when then if not now,
When in the clearest light of tranquil love
Disrobed of Earth's unrest, like some fair star
Thou rulest in the firmament of thought.

Begin we then in humble strains, and search
With patient hope — it may be we shall find
If lowly caution guide our steps; for oft
Truth veileth back her bright and queenly form
From eyes of mortal men: and seek not we
To look within, for fear with too much light
One glimpse benight us: let it be enough
To rule the spirit into harmony
With the great world around: for every thing
That therein is beareth a separate part
In the soul's teaching: let it be enough
Not by a stretch of thought, or painful strain
Of faculty acquired, but with pure love,
Pure and untaught, save what the inner light
Of the great Spirit teacheth, to lay bare
The soul to the influence of each little flower
That springs beneath our feet; and go our way

Rejoicing in the fond companionship
Of every humblest thing; communion blest
In the unpitied and unmurmured woes
And all the simple joys of Nature's babes.

Deep in a chamber of the inner soul
The folded principles of action lie
As in a bud enclosed, which ere the time
Of leaf-awakening Spring comes kindly on,
Containeth sprays and flowers that are to be; —
Thus think thou of the soul; for better thus
Than to desert the mighty parable
That falls unceasing on the ear of man,
And seek new processes of labored thought
That have no fellows in the world of things.

Law is the King of all;[1] we live and move
Not without firm conditions guarded well
In the great Mind that rules us. Manifold
Are the inward workings of the soul; — now seen
And open to the sense, as when we teach
Unto our anguished hearts sufferance of woe;
Now only visible to Angel sight
Or to the eyes of God — gradual and deep,
Owing no homage to the tyrant will.
But each and all, the wrested soul of man
Brings nearer to the course of laws divine:
Whether by strong self-chiding, or by length
Of intercourse with heavenly messengers,
Who veil their presence in the things of Earth.

[1] νόμος πάντων βασιλεύς. — PINDAR.

And therefore Beauty is not spread in vain
Upon this world of man — God is not left
Without his witness; and the daily task
Of human kind is bound in closest ties
To natural beauty; whether in the field
The lavish blessings of the open sky
Are shed around him, or in city vast
The Sun in crimson guise lift up his orb,
Clothing the mist, distinct with domes and towers,
In wreathed glories.

God doth nought in vain;
And from the searchings of benighted souls
Before the light arose, hath flowed to us
Great store of Truth — for in that mighty quest
Nought that was fair on Earth or bright in Heaven
Wanted its honor, or its place assigned,
Or careful culture; and all lovely things
Were ranged for guides along the path to God.

For his fire-beacon for a thousand years
The searching spirit of the lorn Chaldee
Held converse with the starry multitude;
He[1] knew the lamping potentates that bring
Summer and winter, when they wax and wane:
Soothing his solitary soul with song
Low-hummed, of mighty hunters, or the queen

[1] ἄστρων κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βρότοις
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν.
ÆSCHYL. *Agamemnon.*

That blazed in battle-front; or if perchance
Of gentler mood, of Nineveh's soft king
Sardanapalus, that on roses slept,
Lulled by the lingering tremble of soft lutes; —
Deep melodies, whose echoes left the world
Before the empires rose, whose wrecks are we.
How proudly in his Paradise of Art
The old Egyptian must have worn his pomp,
Nature's first moulded form of perfectness
Wrought in her sport, and playfully destroyed
That she might try her artist hand again;
How beautiful was Greece — how marvellous
In polity, and chastened grace severe —
In nicely-balanced strains, and harmonies
Tuned to the varying passion; flute or lyre
Not unaccompanied by solemn dance
In arms, or movement of well-ordered youths
And maids in Dorian tunic simply clad; —
How rich in song, and artful dialogue,
Long-sighted irony, and half-earnest guess
At deeply-pondered truth.

But spirits pure
Deep drinking at the fount of natural joy,
Grew sad and hopeless as the foot of Death
Crept onwards; and beyond the deep-blue hills
And plains o'erflowed with light, and woody paths,
No safe abode of ever-during joy
Lifted its promise to the sight of Man.

'Farewell, farewell for ever — never more
Thy beautiful young form shall pass athwart

Our fond desiring vision; — the great world
Moves on, and human accidents; and Spring
New-clothes the forests, and the warm west wind
Awakes the nightingales; — but thou the while
A handful of dull earth, art not, and we
Insatiable[1] in woe weep evermore
Around the marble where thine ashes lie.'
Such sounds by pillared temple, or hill-side
Sweet with wild roses, or by sacred stream
Errant through mossy rocks, saddened the air,
Whether ripe virgin on the bier were borne,
Or youth untimely cropped; or in still night
The Moon shone full, and choir of maidens moved
Through glades distinct with shadow, bearing vows
Of choicest flowers and hair, — fearful the while
Of thwarting influence or incautious word,
Till round the tomb they poured their votive wine
And moved in dance, or chanted liquid hymns
Soothing the rigid silence. 'Fare thee well:
A journey without end, a wakeless sleep,
Or some half-joyful place, where feeble ghosts
Wander in dreamy twilight, holds thee now;
Thy joy is done: and thine espousals kept
Down in the dark house of forgetfulness.'

Home of our spirits, whether terraced high
From Kedron's brook in thy Judæan hills,
A pleasant place, and joy of all the earth;

[1] At nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
Insatiabiliter deflebimus, æternumque
Nulla dies nobis mœrorem e pectore demet.
LUCR. iii. 919.

Or in a brighter vision opening forth
Thy gold-paved streets and jasper architraves,
Above, and free, and Mother of us all;
To thee my step would turn — to thy new songs
Fain would I tune the harp, that lightly skilled
Essays high music; in the eternal calm
Of thy pure air, and by thy living streams,
Drink long forgetfulness of earthly woe.
For thy sweet port this little bark long bound
Hath wandered on the waters — or my steps
Devious through many a land, each pleasant hill
Each mossy nook hath stayed on search for thee;
Still somewhat finding of wide-scattered joy,
Some thoughts of deep sweet meaning; but desire
Grows with my spirit's growth; and nought on earth
Is glorious now as it hath glorious been,
So doth my forward vision search, and read
In the dim distance tracks of severed light
Forerunning thy descent, by prophets seen
Of old in prospect, out of heaven from God; —
Our earth hath nought so blessed; not the grove
Budding in Spring, with choir of nightingales
Vocal in shadowy moonlight;[1] not the crest

[1] *Οὔλυμπόν δ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ*
ἔμμεναι· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται, οὔδε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ
δεύεται· οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη
πέπταται ἀννέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη.

Hom. Od. ζ 40.

Apparet Divûm numen, sedesque quietæ:
Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis
Adspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruina
Cana cadens violat: semperque innubilus æther
Integit et large diffuso lumine ridet.

Lucret. iii. 18.

Of old Olympus, seat of Gods secure
Through the eternal ages, which nor wind
With rude breath dares to shake, nor rain to wet,
Nor flakes of floating snow; but ever stretch
The boundless fields of ether without cloud
Above, and dazzling sheen of whitest light
Plays round the holy summit.

— Art thou one
Before whose eyes bright visions have unveiled
Of peace and long-expected rest — to whom
There hath been shown some timber-shadowed home
In a fair country all prepared for thee,
Just shown and then withdrawn — to whom some heart
But yesterday in firmest union bound,
Hath vanished from the wide world utterly,
Leaving upon thy breast a dreary want,
As doth a strain of melody broken off
In a sweet cadence, on the longing ear?
Hast thou in very hopelessness of soul
Bowed down to tyrant power, cheating thy life
Of the sweet guidance of the will, and toiled
Bridled by strong necessity, unnamed
Save by proud reasoners on the mass of men,
An unit in the aggregate, a wheel
In the base system that unsouls our race —
While human feelings deep and pure within
Flow out to wife and child, brother and friend,
And thy tired spirit looks forth in faith to Him
Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong?
Art thou a child of Nature's own, and lovest
To hold sweet communings with this fair world

More than to search thy heart, or interchange
Thought with the thought of other — is the Earth
To thee a well of never-failing joy —
Dost thou affect the charms of budding Spring,
Seat beneath arching shade, or with slow feet
To pace the flowery-mantled field, and cull
With careless hand the glory and delight
Of motley meadows — art thou deep in love
With the glorious changes of the dappled sky,
Whether the circle of the golden Sun
Shower the heavens with brightness, newly risen,
Scattering the morning frost, or glorify
The liquid clearness of the Summer heaven,
Or the West fade in twilight, till the dark
Fall on the fields, and Silence and sweet Peace
Pass hand in hand along the slumbering Earth —
Then looking from a chamber-casement high
Over paternal groves, beneath the Moon,
Listlessly pondering, hear the village-clock
Strike in the voiceless night?

All natural joy
From the dull heartlessness of mortal men
Set free for ever — Liberty and Peace,
Desire and its fulfilment, side by side
Ranged ever, all the long bright days of heaven,
These shall be thine, in that fair city of God
Dwelling, where ever through the blessed streets
Serene light vibrates, and the starry gulfs
Of ether lie above in perfect rest.

But why delay and parley with delight

On this side of the river — steeply rise
The woody shores beyond, with palace-towers
And golden minarets sublimely crowned,
All full of light and glorious; and the stream
Is calm and silent, flowing darkly on
Among strange flowers, and thickets of deep shade:
Weary with toil, and worn with travel, plunge
From the green margin sweetly without fear;
Softly put back the wave on either side,
And skim the surface with thy nether lip;
Soon shalt thou press the flowers on yonder bank,
And rest on yielding roses. 'T is not given
To trace thee — but most like some mighty stream
Under a rocky barrier working deep
With hollow gushings soon to burst afresh
Over a new land faintly pictured forth
Each day on our horizon — such art thou.

The righteous souls are in the hand of God —
No harm shall touch them — laid securely by
Even in an infant's slumber, or perchance
In gradual progress of their mighty change:
The summer Sabbath is not half so calm
As is the blessed chamber where repose
After their earthly labors, fenced around
With guardian Cherubim that weary not,
The spirits of the just: not cave of sleep
In ancient Lemnos, murmured round by waves; —
Not the charmed slumber of that British king
Resting beneath the crumbled abbey-walls
In the westward-sloping vale of Avalon; [1] —

[1] King Arthur, buried at Glastonbury in a sleep, from which legends say he shall awake and reign again.

Nor the ambrosial trance of Jove's great son
That fell beneath Troy walls — whom Death and Sleep
On dusky-folded wings to Lycia land
Bore through the yielding ether without noise.[1]

But who can tell the glories of the day
When from a thousand hills and wooded vales
This Earth shall send her tribute forth to God,
Myriads of blessed forms — when her old wound
Shall have been fully healed — the Covenant
Rule in the bright ascendant — while above
Throb through the air from new-awakened harps
Pulses of ancient song: and God's own Bride
Drest for her Husband, lift her sky-clear brow
Out of the dust?

She dwells in sorrow long:
Her sun of life and light hath sunk away;
Her night, far spent it may be, yet is thick
And hangeth heavily along the sky;
We cannot see her flowers that bloom around,
Save where in dazzling clusters through the dark
Her virgin lilies drink the scattered light:
She feedeth upon dew distilled from earth
And air, and transitory vapor dim;
But still there is a brightness in the West
Painfully traced by all her watchful sons;
Even the glory, at whose parting track

[1] πέμπε δέ μιν πόμποισιν ἅμα κραιπνοῖσι φέρεσθαι,
ὕπνῳ καὶ θανάτῳ διδυμάοσιν, οἵ ῥά μιν ὦκα
κάτθεσαν ἐν Λυκίης εὐρείης πιόνι δήμῳ.

Hom. *Il.* π.

The men of Galilee stood gazing up
With shadowed foreheads, till the white-robed pair
Spoke comfort; and along the hopeful East
A clear pale shining, promise of a day
Glorious and wonderful; — the fainting stars
Have lost their lustre — voice of wassail mirth
Is none, for the revels of Earth have passed away;
All chivalry and pomp that was of yore,
And fields of cloth of gold — all delicate work
In metal and in stone, the pride of kings
And task of captive tribes, have ceased to be:
Man misseth his old skill; but ever wins
Upon the world the calm and steady light
Forerunning the great Sun; that lighteth now
Perchance fair orbs around us; soon to burst
In perfect glory on the earth we love.

Rise up, thou daughter of the brightest King
That ever wore a crown; awake and rise,
Forget thy people and thy father's house;
Thou that wert yeaned in winter dreariness,
Swathed in the manger of thy Love and Lord,
Shake off thy dust and rise — thine hour is come,
The marriage-morn is come, and all the bells
In heaven are whispering with their silver tongues;
And the faint pulses of the sound divine
Are swimming o'er thee where thou liest yet
Unwaked; — the pomp of Seraphim ere long
Will be upon thee, and the sheen of Heaven
Fall on thy brow, as doth the glimpse of the East
Upon the folded flower.

My task is done:
The garlands that I wreathed around my brow
Are fading on it, and the air of song
Is passing from me. Thou art standing by,
Bent o'er thy Poet with Love-lighted eyes,
And raptured look of ardent hope, that tells
Of holiest influences shed forth within.
I have not talked with one who cannot feel
Every minutest nourishment of thought;
For I have seen thee when the western gale
Blew loud and rude upon our native hills,
With bonnet doffed, courting the busy wind;
And I have looked on thee till my dim eyes
Swam with delight, and thou didst seem to me,
As I stood by thee on the aery steep,
Like a young Seraph ready poised for flight;
O sweet illusion — but in after time
The truth shall follow — for we two shall stand
Upon the everlasting hills of heaven,
With glorious beauty clothed that cannot die;
And far beneath upon the myriad worlds
All unimaginable glory spread,
Brighter than brightest floods of rosy light
Poured by the sunset on our western sea.
It will not matter to the soul set free
Which hemisphere we tenanted on earth;
Whether it sojourned where the northern wain
Dips not in Ocean,[1] or beneath the heaven
Where overhead the austral cross is fixed
Glistering in glory, or amidst the snows

[1] οἵη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοέτρων ὠκεάνοιο.
Hom. *Il.* σ.

Under the playing of the Boreal lights;
We thall be free to wander evermore
In thought, the spirit's motion, o'er the wide
And wondrous universe, with messages
To beautiful beings who have never fallen,
And worlds that never heard the cry of sin.
As one who in a new and beauteous land
Lately arrived, rests not till every way
His steps have wandered, searching out new paths
To far off towers that rise along the vales;
So to a thousand founts of light unknown
Our new enfranchised souls shall travel forth,
Rich with strange beauties — some, it may be, clad
With woods and interlaced with playful brooks
And ever-changing shades, like this our home;
And some a wilderness of craggy thrones,
With skies of stranger hue; and glorious
With train of orbs attendant on their state,
Mingling their rays in atmospheres of Love.

But yet one word. Yon silver-fringed clouds
That scale the western barrier of the world
Pile upon pile, seem to have borrowed gleams
Of that ethereal light I told thee of;
And the clear blue, so calm and deep behind
On which they sail, is like the mighty Soul,
Thus fathomless, thus dwelt in by strange things,
On which the forms of multitudinous thought
Float ever, bright or dark, or complicate
Of light and darkness; and the quiet stars
Are fountains of far-off and milder fire,
Nearer the throne of God; the hopes and joys

Of which I sung to thee, that make no wave
Upon the stream of memory; but from which
The spiritual senses take their power,
And from a myriad stones, costly though small,
Is built the mansion of the blessed soul.

Thus far in golden dreams of youth, I sung
Of Love and Beauty — beauty not the child
Of change, nor love the growth of fierce desire,
But calm and blessed both, the heritage
Of purest spirits, sprung from trust in God.
Further to pierce the veil, asks riper strength,
And firmer resting on conclusions fixed
By patient labor, wrought in manly years.
Here rest we then: our message thus declared,
Leave the full echoes of our harp to ebb
Back from the sated ear: teaching meanwhile
Our thoughts to meditate new melodies,
Our hands to touch the strings with safer skill.

Note by the Author, 1852. — This Poem grievously wants *coherence* and *object*. It is a collection of detached passages of youthful feeling, strung together without much heed even to semblable connection. I have sometimes thought of recasting it altogether; but, at this distance of time, it would be dangerous to piece the work of twenty years ago. So I leave it as it stands, praying the reader to make allowance for its crudities and incoherences.

WRITTEN JANUARY 1, 1832.

The year is born to-day — methinks it hath
A chilly time of it; for down the sky
The flaky frost-cloud stretches, and the Sun
Lifted his large light from the Eastern plains,
With gloomy mist-enfolded countenance,
And garments rolled in blood. Under the haze
Along the face of the waters, gather fast
Sharp spikes of the fresh ice — as if the year
That died last night, had dropt down suddenly
In his full strength of genial government,
Prisoning the sharp breath of the Northern winds;
Who now burst forth and revel unrestrained
Over the new king's months of infancy.

The bells rung merrily when the old year died;
He past away in music; his death-sleep
Closed on him like the slumber of a child
When a sweet hymn in a sweet voice above him
Takes up into its sound his gentle being.

And we will raise to him two monuments;
One where he died, and one where he lies buried;

One in the pealing of those midnight bells,
Their swell and fall, and varied interchange,
The tones that come again upon the spirit
In years far off, mid unshaped accidents; —
And one in the deep quiet of the soul,
The mingled memories of a thousand moods
Of joy and sorrow; — and his epitaph
Shall be upon him — 'Here lie the remains
Of one, who was less valued while he lived,
Than thought on when he died.'

MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS.

'Tis just the moment when Time hangs in doubt
Between the parting and the coming day:
The deep clock tolleth twelve — and its full tide
Of swelling sound pours out upon the wind:
The bright cold stars are glittering from the sky,
And one of large light, fairer than the rest,
Looks through yon screen of leaf-deserted limes.

Not undelightful are the trains of thought
That usher in my midnights. Thou art there
Whom my soul loveth; in that calm still hour
Thy image floats before mine inward eye,
Placid as is the season, wrapt in sleep,
And heaving gently with unconscious breath;
While thy bright guardian watches at thy head,
Unseen of mortal, through the nightly hours,
Active against intrusion on thy mind
Of aught unholy: careful to preserve
The sanctuary of thy spirit swept and pure
For early worship when thine eyelids wake.
Sleep softly, and wake softly! — may thy dreams
Be all of Heaven, as mine are all of Thee!

PEACE.

I HAVE found Peace in the bright earth
And in the sunny sky:
By the low voice of summer seas,
And where streams murmur by;

I find it in the quiet tone
Of voices that I love:
By the flickering of a twilight fire,
And in a leafless grove;

I find it in the silent flow
Of solitary thought:
In calm half-meditated dreams,
And reasonings self-taught;

But seldom have I found such peace,
As in the soul's deep joy
Of passing onward free from harm
Through every day's employ.

If gems we seek, we only tire,
And lift our hopes too high;
The constant flowers that line our way
Alone can satisfy.

A DOUBT.

Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar. WORDSWORTH.

I KNOW not how the right may be: —
But I give thanks whene'er I see
Down in the green slopes of the West
Old Glastonbury's towered crest.

I know not how the right may be: —
But I have oft had joy to see
By play of chance my road beside
The Cross on which our Saviour died.

I know not how the right may be: —
But I loved once a tall elm-tree,
Because between its boughs on high
That Cross was opened on the sky.

I know not how the right may be: —
But I have shed strange tears to see,
Passing an unknown town at night,
In some warm chamber full of light,
A Mother and two Children fair,
Kneeling with lifted hands at prayer.

I know not how it is — my boast
Of Reason seems to dwindle down;
And my mind seems down-argued most
By forced conclusions not her own.

I know not how it is — unless
Weakness and strength are near allied;
And joys which most the spirit bless
Are furthest off from earthly pride.

TO-MORROW.

To-morrow — 'tis an idle sound,
Tell me of no such dreary thing —
A new land whither I am bound
After strange wandering.

What care I if bright blossoms there
Unfold, and sunny be the field;
If laded boughs in summer air
Their pulpy fruitage yield?

While deck to-day my pleasant bower
Upon my own loved mountain-side
The azure periwinkle-flower,
And violet deep-eyed?

Tell me not of to-morrow — calm
In His great hand I would abide
Who fills my present hour with balm,
And trust, whate'er betide.

AMOR MUNDANUS.

Freed from the womb, and from the bounds
With which the stepdame infancy
Our days of pupilage surrounds,
We spring up beautiful and free;
Divine in form, divine in grace,
All wonderful to those who look
Upon the heavenly-printed face,
In which, as in a living book,
The characters of high descent
Are seen with air and motion blent.

Behold the curious Babe exploring
The furniture of its new earth;
And Time with ministrant hand restoring
The bloom and strength it lost in birth;
It is as though some magic power
Had shut the senses of a Bride,
And in strange air from hour to hour
She breathed away the summer-tide,
And woke and found herself alone,
And all her sweet fore-castings gone.

It is as though she should not wear
The weeds of sober widowhood,

But just to memory give a tear,
  Then rise with stirring hope renewed;
And ere the period of the Sun,
  In joyful garments habited,
Leaning upon another One,
  Should walk the flowery path to wed;
And build among new children's eyes
A home of rooted sympathies.

Child — that dost evermore desire
  For something thou canst call thine own;
In summer-sun, by winter-fire,
  Jealously bent to rule alone;
Thou gatherest round thee plenteous store
  Wherewith to sate thy longing sight;
Thou ever hast, and wishest more,
  And so thou schoolest thy delight
To drink at every little stream,
And bask in every daily beam.

And when thy limbs are proud and strong,
  Thou seekest out a home to last,
Among the dainties that belong
  To the strange shore where thou art cast;
For kisses and kind words bestowed
  Thou quittest hope, and all content
Thou takest up thy calm abode
  In the country of thy banishment;
Careless of tidings that relate
To winning back thy lost estate.

AMOR CŒLESTIS.

I HAVE a longing to be free;
The soul that in me hides
Its mouldering fires, unwillingly
Its day of liberation bides.

Clouds that above the flowery earth
Float onward in the air,
Rejoice as each day hath its birth,
They hurry on they list not where.

Birds, that along their gladsome way
Flutter in wavy flight,
Pipe in their arbors all the day,
And rest upon their branch at night;

Stars, like a fleet of glittering sail
On the upper ocean driven,
At the western haven never fail
To cease from earth and enter heaven;

And then forth issuing from the east,
When night-winds softly blow,

They ride in order bright and blest,
  Their clustered myriads none may know:

Only this breath of life divine
  May not escape away,
Nor move in the gold rays that shine
  Around the blessed eye of day.

Only this bird of sweetest strain
  Must hide its notes in gloom;
Only this purest flower from stain
  In secret places veil its bloom.

Only this star of clearest light
  Hath not its course above;
But, undistinguished from the night,
  It dwells on earth, and wins no love.

AMPTON, SUFFOLK, 1833.

I STAND upon the margin of our level lake;
The daylight from the west is fading fast away;
The rooks above the wood their evening concert make,
And in the gleaming pool the fishes leap and play.

Eastward, appearing dimly through the golden haze,
The Moon in perfect circle lifts her solemn light;
The waters tremble over with a restless blaze,
With ripples and wood-shadows dappled dark and bright.

Why is my deathless spirit bound to minister
To transient matter? fettered to this vision fair,
I seem to lose all breath, no thought hath power to stir:
Ye take too much upon you, sights of earth and air!

Is it some purpose high of fête or festival
For Beings never pierced by edge of mortal sight;
And are there poured around me, camping within call,
A beautiful throng of Angels triumphing in delight?

Is it for some pure Spirits torn on earth asunder,
Who long, long years have pined in solitude and woe,

To meet together here, and speak their love and wonder,
And feast on joy that none but risen souls can know?

Might I but reach the secret of that hidden power
That dwells in the mute children of our parent Earth,
The magic that can bind together in one hour
Contented joy and yearnings for our mightier birth!

THE SAME.

There is a wood, not far from where I pass
My unrecorded hours in pleasant toil; —
Each tangle of the spreading boughs I know,
And where each bird doth nestle; every pool
That makes a mirror for the quivering leaves;
The days are past when I could wander on
And lose myself, expecting at each turn
New pillared avenues of stately trees,
And glimpses of far waters.

Even thus
Will all the joy and beauty of this Earth
Become familiar things; wonder shall yield
To cold arrangement; and the voices deep
Of the great Kings of Song shall cease to stir
Mine inner fount of tears. The power of God
Shall not be thereby shortened in my soul,
But in my weakness rather perfect made,
In the sure progress of untroubled Love
That heals the fevered heart; as in the morn
Upon the fading of the partial stars
Wins the calm Daylight, over all diffused.

WRITTEN IN AN ARTIFICIAL PLEASURE-GROUND.

Ibid. 1834.

'T is pretty, doubtless: water, grass, and trees,
The man who hath a heart must always please:
The morning glories from yon steaming lake
A thousand colors into being wake;
The naked sunlight of the summer day
Is veiled by boughs that overarch the way;
And moonlight sweetly in her silver flood
Bathes the long reaches of the lawn and wood.

But ever comes upon the sated breast
A sense of incompleteness and unrest,
A loathing of the fretfulness of men,
And yearning for Earth's natural face again.

Thus when surprised our family circle bend
Over some token sent us by a friend,
Admire the traces of his happy art,
Turn every side, and criticise each part, —
Emblazoned in the tradesman's mystic lines,
Lo at the back a three-and-sixpence shines!

PALINODE TO THE FOREGOING.

Thus sung I in these grounds erewhile, perchance
Tempted by sudden aptitude of words
Into that measure which least pleaseth me,
Sacred to Satire and unquiet thought.
Forgive me, shades — forgive me, thou calm lake
Of spreading water, quietly asleep
Between thy fringing woods: Man is not less
Than Nature holy; and these records fair
Of striving after likeness to the forms
Of natural beauty may not be despised
By man, as them imperfect; rather stored
Within the patient spirit, if perhaps
The slow-learnt lesson of obeying God
By them be furthered, and the complete soul
Pass from the fretful crowd of hopes and fears
Into her silent oratory, where,
With calm submission and unshaken trust,
She may lay out herself to imitate
All forms of beauty spiritual, and make
A pleasure-ground within, for angels fit,
And Him whose voice was heard among the trees,
Walking in Eden in the cool of the day.

ANTICIPATION.

In the bright summer weather
We twain will go together,
By the river's silver swathes,
Where the melilotus bathes
Its blooms gold-bright;
And along the distant stream
Broods the white silent steam,
Thickening onward like a dream
In the first sleep of night.

In the warm summer weather
We twain will go together,
On the west side of the hill,
While the leaves are keeping still,
As the sun goes down;
And the long straight streams
Of the mellow setting beams
Light up with rosy gleams
Mountain, moor, and town.

In the calm summer weather
We twain will go together,

When the western planet's light
Is full, and warm, and bright,
Above the western flood;
Only the impatient rill
To itself is talking still,
By the hedge-row down the hill,
On the border of the wood.

1832.

The cowslip standeth in the grass,
The primrose in the budding grove
  Hath laid her pale fair breast
  On the green sward to rest:
The vapors that cease not to rove
Athwart the blue sky, fleet and pass,
  And ever o'er the golden sun
    Their shadows run.

He is not in the glittering mead,
Stooping to fill his hands with flowers;
  He is not in the wood
  Plucking the primrose-bud;
He doth not mark the bloomy hours,
The joy and May he doth not heed:
  Under the church-wall in the shade
    His bed is made.

AN EASTER ODE.

The calm of blessed Night
  Is on Judæa's hills;
The full-orbed moon with cloudless light
  Is sparkling on their rills:
One spot above the rest
  Is still and tranquil seen,
The chamber as of something blest,
  Amidst its bowers of green.

Around that spot each way
  The figures ye may trace
Of men-at-arms in grim array,
  Girding the solemn place:
But other bands are there —
  And, glistening through the gloom,
Legions of angels bright and fair
  Throng to that wondrous tomb.

'Praise be to God on high!
  The triumph-hour is near;
The Lord hath won the victory,
  The foe is vanquished here!

Dark Grave, yield up the dead —
  Give up thy prey, thou Earth;
In death He bowed His sacred head, —
  He springs anew to birth!

Sharp was the wreath of thorns
  Around His suffering brow;
But glory rich His head adorns,
  And Angels crown Him now.
Roll yonder rock away
  That bars the marble gate;
And gather we in bright array
  To swell the Victor's state!'

'Hail, hail, hail!
  The Lord is risen indeed!
The curse is made of none avail;
  The sons of men are freed!'

WEDNESDAY IN EASTER WEEK, 1844.

The lovely form of God's own Church
It riseth in all lands,
On mountain sides, in wooded vales,
And by the desert sands.

There is it, with its solemn aisles,
A heavenly, holy thing,
And round its walls lie Christian dead
Blessedly slumbering.

Though sects and factions rend the world,
Peace is its heritage;
Unchanged, though empires by it pass,
The same from age to age.

The hallowed form our fathers built,
That hallowed form build we;
Let not one stone from its own place
Removed ever be.

Scoff as thou passest, if thou wilt,
Thou man that hast no faith —

Thou that no sorrows hast in life,
Nor blessedness in death.

But we will build, for all thou scoff,
And cry, 'What waste is this!'
The Lord our God hath given us all,
And all is therefore His.

Clear voices from above sound out
Their blessing on the pile;
The dead beneath support our hands,
And succor us the while.

Yea, when we climb the rising walls
Is peace and comfort given;
Because the work is not of earth,
But hath its end in Heaven.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, 1844.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF CLEMENT HENRY OKE ALFORD.

My blessed child! Last Sunday morn,
That Feast of all the year,
We held thee in our wearied arms,
Distraught with hope and fear.

We soothed thee with caresses fond;
With words, alas, how vain!
We strove to still thy piercing moans,
And set to sleep thy pain.

But still the thought would ever rise
In stern reality,
Ill balanced by returning hope,
That our dear child would die.

Another Sunday morn is come,
But all is altered now:
Pilgrims upon this earth are we,
A blessed saint art thou.

No mother now beside thy bed
  Lets fall her burning tears;
No father bathes thy fevered head,
  Nor whispers rising fears.

That form so fair, those eyes so bright,
  Are laid in hallowed ground,
And over them the churchward chimes
  A peaceful requiem sound.

But thou, dear glorious child, art fled,
  And on thy Saviour's breast
Dost for the resurrection-morn
  In holy quiet rest.

Oh, never would we change this hour,
  With blessed hope so bright,
For that sad day of fainting prayers,
  For that last anxious night.

The earth and all that is therein
  Are hallowed to us now:
In work, at rest, at home, abroad,
  Where'er we turn, art thou.

Thou blessed child in Paradise,
  Safe fled from sin and pain;
Oh, not for all thy life could give
  Shouldst thou be here again.

FAITH.

I THOUGHT, if I could go and stand
  Beside our dear one's grave in Faith,
And lift the voice, and stretch the hand,
  And call on Him who conquered Death;

And then, in my reliance deep,
  Bid the new-buried corpse come forth,—
The call of Faith would break that sleep,
  And animate that lifeless earth.

But while I pondered thus, within
  A gentle voice reminded me
That I was weak, and soiled with sin,—
  That Faith must strong and holy be.

'Raise up the deadness of thy soul
  Be pure, and watch, and fast, and pray;
Then mayst thou bid the sick be whole,
  Then shall the dead thy voice obey.'

Lord God the Spirit! purify
  My thoughts—bind fast my life to Thee;
So shall I meet my babe on high,
  Though he may not return to me.

Wymeswold, May 9, 1844.

THE PASSION OF ST. AGNES.

From Prudentius *περὶ στεφάνων*.

Near the town of Romulus,
Faithful Maid and Martyr blest,
  Agnes hath her sepulchre;
From her holy place of rest
She can see the city-towers;
  She can hear the city stir.

Double crown of martyrdom
  She hath granted her;
Chaste unspotted virginal,
Glory of a willing death.
Christ-devoted, she had scorned
Idol-sacrifice to pay; —
They had searched her long and sore,
Balancing her soul between
Offers thick of ease and bliss,
Iron-hearted threats of pain;
Mild and proud she looked on them:
'Ye may take and try me here;
So believe me, as ye see

Joy look from me in the fires,
Praises when ye list for cries.'

Then the stark tormentor said,
'It is easy to hush down
Struggling pain when life is cheap;
But she hath a precious gem;
Do she not our sacrifice,
Into public place impure
Be she led, and peril make
Of the pearl she loveth best;
Life she selleth but to buy
Visions of untasted bliss;
May be she will sell her dreams
To redeem her chastity.'

Then the holy Agnes said,
'Deem ye never that my Christ
Will forget his chosen so,
As to let the golden crown
Of my virgin brow be dimmed;
Ye may crust your steel with blood,
But my Christ and I have sworn
These His members bright and pure
Earthly lust shall never soil.'

Thus she boasted, and was led
Blessed, in unblessed wise,
Where the public pavements meet;
There she stood, and every face
Of the reverential crowd
Turned away in fear and shame,

That they might not lightly look
On the holy treasure there:
One alone with slippery eye
Rashly dared her form to scan;
Swiftly leapt the winged fire
Down upon his truant sight;
Dazzled with the glory-flame
Prone he fell, and quivering lay;
Him his comrades lifted slow,
Bore away with words of dole.

She in holy triumph went
Hymning Christ with liquid song;—
One step hath she neared the door
Of the palace of the skies,
Yet another she must climb;—
Angry shouts the vanquished foe
Fierce defiance — Bare thy sword,
Do our hest, and strike her low.

When the blessed Agnes saw
Near her gleam the naked blade,
'This,' she cried with lightsome cheer,
'Is the lover shall be mine;
Rather this, though icy chill
Be its edge and pitiless,
Than some youth of odors breathing,
Falsest vows in roses wreathing.
I will go to meet its suit;
So with Christ above the arch
Of yon heaven, a Virgin Spouse,
Shall my marriage-feast begin.

Husband, roll thou back the doors
Of thy golden banquet house;
Call me, I will follow thee,
Virgin Victim, Virgin Spouse.'

So she spoke, and bent her head
Blessed, in adoring wise;
Once above her gleamed the steel,
Then the sacred river flowed
That makes glad the city of God,
Then her spirit bounded forth
Free into the liquid air;
Angels lined her upward way
With a path of snowy light.
Marvelling she beholds the earth
Underspread her mounting feet,
Sees the shades beneath her roll
Round about the monstrous world;
Laughs to scorn the life of men
Tossed on waves of vanity;
Laughs the pomp of kings to scorn,
Robes, and gilded palaces,
Thirst of gold, and lust of power,
All our envy, all our hope.

Agnes, in her triumph high,
Faithful Maid and Martyr blest,
Treading in her victory
On the ancient dragon's crest,
Crowned by God with double crown
On thy clear and shining brow,
Happy Virgin, looks she down
On the souls that wrestle now.

A NIGHT SCENE.

July, 1830.

We looked into the silent sky,
  We gazed upon thee, lovely Moon;
And thou wert shining clear and bright,
  In night's unclouded noon.

And it was sweet to stand and think,
  Amidst the deep tranquillity,
How many eyes at that still hour
  Were looking upon thee.

The exile on the foreign shore
  Hath stood and turned his eye on thee;
And he hath thought upon his days
  Of hope and infancy;

And he hath said, there may be those
  Gazing upon thy beauty now,
Who stamped the last, the burning kiss
  Upon his parting brow.

The captive in his grated cell
Hath cast him in thy peering light;
And looked on thee, and almost blest
The solitary night.

The infant slumbereth in his cot,
And on him is thy liquid beam;
And shapes of soft and faery light
Have mingled in his dream.

The sick upon the sleepless bed
Scared by the dream of wild unrest,
The fond and mute companionship
Of thy sweet ray hath blest.

The mourner in thy silver beam
Hath laid his sad and wasted form,
And felt that there is quiet there
To calm his inward storm.

PORTSMOUTH, 1830.

When I am in my grave,
The busy clouds will wander on;
This Moon, that silver-tips each dancing wave,
Will shine as it hath shone.

When I am low in ground,
The Spring will call and wake the flowers,
And yonder little knoll will show as gay
As it hath bloomed when ours.

When I am in the sky,
Long leagues above the evening-star,
The city-hum shall sound as fitfully
As now it comes from far.

When I am spirit clear,
More pure than is this Ocean-moon,
The false world in the great Eternal's ear
Shall make no better tune.

God, lift me from the power
Of flesh-corruption: how shall I
Bear to be borne along with stainless flower
And fleecy cloud on high!

God, lift up unto me
The sinning heart of human-kind;
How can I flutter down the skies and see
Their errant souls and blind?

Or wrap me in the light
That folds thy glory's outer zone;
Be Thou the sole horizon to my sight,
Content in Thee alone.

HYMNS

FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN THE YEAR OF THE CHURCH.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

Of all the honors man may wear,
  Of all his titles proudly stored,
No lowly palm this name shall bear,
  'The first to follow Christ the Lord.'

Such name thou hast, who didst incline,
  Fired with the great Forerunner's joy,
Homeward to track the steps divine,
  And watch the Saviour's blest employ.[1]

Lord, give to us, Thy servants, grace
  To hear whene'er Thy preachers speak;
When Thou commandest, Seek my face,
  Thy face in earnest hope to seek.

[1] St. John, i. 39.

Thus with the glorious company
Of Thine Apostles may we raise,
Through all eternity to Thee,
Glad hymns of never-ending praise.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

I.

The voice of one that cries
Along the wilds untrod;
'Prepare ye in the wilderness
A highway for our God.

Be every valley raised,
And every hill made low,
The crooked straight, the rugged plain;
For God hath willed it so.

The glory of the Lord
To all men shall appear;
His word shall sound throughout the world,
And every nation hear.

Man's glory is a flower,
The flesh of man is grass:
Only the promise of our God
Is now, and ever was.'

II.

Come to Thy temple, Lord,
Thy waiting Church to bless;
Let here Thy glory be adored,
Give here Thy word success.

Our inmost hearts refine,
And for Thyself prepare;
Cast out all thoughts but thoughts divine,
And reign triumphant there.

Thy servants, Lord, we are,
Baptized into Thy name;
All hurtful things put from us far,
All works of sin and shame.

Come to Thy temple, Lord,
Thine own assembly bless;
That all may offer with accord
Off'rings of righteousness.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Earth is past away and gone,
All her glories every one,
All her pomp is broken down;
God is reigning — God alone!

All her high ones lowly lie,
All her mirth hath passed by,
All her merry-hearted sigh;
God is reigning — God on high!

No more sorrow, no more night;
Perfect joy, and purest light;
With His spotless saints and bright,
God is reigning in the height!

Blessing, praise, and glory bring,
Offer every holy thing;
Everlasting praises sing;
God is reigning, God our King!

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

When Christ the Lord would come on earth,
  His messenger before Him went,
The greatest born of mortal birth,
  And charged with words of deep intent.

The least of all that here attend
  Hath honor greater far than he;
He was the Bridegroom's joyful friend,
  His Body and his Spouse are we.

A higher race, the sons of light,
  Of water and the Spirit born;
He the last star of parting night,
  And we the children of the morn.

And as he boldly spake Thy word,
  And joyed to hear the Bridegroom's voice;
Thus may Thy pastors teach, O Lord,
  And thus Thy hearing Church rejoice.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

Go forward in your course,
  Ye armies of the sky;
Because the Lord your God
  Doth lead to victory.

Press onward to the mark,
  Ye that have life and breath;
Resolved for good or ill,
  For peril or for death.

The first who dared to die
  Had blessed visions given;
The glory on Him shone
  Down from the open heaven.

Look up into the skies,
  Ye of the latter day;
The shining of that light
  Shall never pass away.

Your bitter foes in vain
  Their storms of malice shower;
Behold your Captain stand
  At God's right hand in power.

Each scattering of the Church
  The word of God shall sow;
For every cruel stroke,
  The holy plant shall grow.

Lift up the voice of prayer
  Before your enemies;
And from their very ranks
  Fresh martyrs shall arise.

ST. JOHN'S DAY.

'Little children, dwell in love;
New begotten from above,
Ye by this your birth may know,
That ye dwell in love below.

God your Father reigns on high,
Unbeheld by mortal eye;
Him ye see not; love Him then,
In His types, your fellow-men.

Not in semblance nor in word,
But in holy thoughts unheard,
But in very truth and deed,
Share their joy, and help their need.'

Thus the Saint whom Jesus loved
Spoke in word, in action proved:
Lord, may Thy disciples be
Like to him, and like to Thee!

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

The Lord our God is full of might,
And reigns in highest bliss;
All wisdom, power and majesty
For evermore are His.

He needeth not the strength of man
To stand upon His side;
Out of the mouths of sucking babes
His name is glorified.

The race is not unto the swift,
Nor to the strong the prize;
An infant band for Christ hath died,
And enters first the skies.

Thus every station, every age,
The creatures of His will,
His high behests of Providence
In life and death fulfil.

Full many a soul by God held dear
Man's pride hath overpast;
For there are last that shall be first,
And first that shall be last.

CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

Thy Blood, O Christ, hath made our peace
Not only that whereby
The ground of Calvary was stained
When Thou wert hung on high :

Not only that which, in Thine hour
Of fear and agony,
Distilled upon Thy trembling frame
In dark Gethsemane:

But that shed from Thee when at first
In childhood Thou didst deign
Thus to endure for sinful man
The legal rite of pain.

And as with suffering and with Thee
Our yearly course begins;
So teach us to renounce the flesh,
And put away our sins;

That in the Israel of Thy Church
We may not lose our part;
In spirit and in body pure,
And circumcised in heart.

EPIPHANY.

Thou that art the Father's Word,
Thou that art the Lamb of God,
Thou that art the Virgin's Son,
Thou that savest souls undone,
Sacred sacrifice for sin,
Fount of piety within;
Hail, Lord Jesus.

Thou to whom Thine angels raise
Quiring songs of sweetest praise,
Thou that art the flower and fruit,
Virgin-born from Jesse's root,
Shedding holy peace abroad,
Perfect man and perfect God;
Hail, Lord Jesus.

Thou that art the door of heaven,
Living bread in mercy given,
Brightness of the Father's face,
Everlasting Prince of peace,
Precious pearl beyond all price,
Brightest star in all the skies;
Hail, Lord Jesus.

King and Spouse of holy hearts,
Fount of love that ne'er departs,
Sweetest life and brightest day,
Truest truth, and surest way
That leads onward to the blest
Sabbath of eternal rest;
Hail, Lord Jesus.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

From St. Bernard.

Lo, the storms of life are breaking,
Faithless fears our hearts are shaking;
For our succor undertaking,
Lord and Saviour, help us!

Lo, the world, from Thee rebelling,
Round Thy Church in pride is swelling;
With Thy word their madness quelling,
Lord and Saviour, help us!

On Thine own command relying,
We our onward task are plying;
Unto Thee for safety sighing,
Lord and Saviour, help us!

By Thy birth, Thy cross, and passion,
By Thy tears of deep compassion,
By Thy mighty intercession,
Lord and Saviour, help us!

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

O Thou, at whose divine command
Good seed is sown in every land;
Thine Holy Ghost to us impart,
And for Thy word prepare each heart.

Not among thorns of worldly thought,
Nor soon by passing plunderers caught,
Nor lacking depth the root to feed,
May we receive Thy Spirit's seed.

But may it, while Thy sowers toil,
Fall in a good and honest soil;
And springing up from firmest root,
With patience bear abundant fruit.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

JESUS our Lord, who tempted wast
In all points like as we;
And didst achieve in that dread fight
Undoubted victory;

Behold Thy Spouse, a season laid
Beneath the tempter's power;
Led up into the wilderness
To wait her trying hour.

May she her forces ready make,
And gird her weapons fast;
And with the armor of her God
Stand fearless to the last.

Teach us, when, angered at our lot,
Our faithless souls repine,
Man liveth not by bread alone,
But every word divine.

When we would rush on danger's point,
And dare the lifted sword,
Speak in our ears the warning voice,
'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord.'

And when, deceived by pride or power,
Earth's idols we espouse,
Teach us that Thou art God alone,
And on us are Thy vows.

Thus shall we more than conquerors
With Thee pass through the strife;
And angels come and minister
Around the heirs of life.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

From St. Bernard.

Glory of Thy Father's face,
Fountain deep of love and grace,
Who, Lord, can repay Thee thus,
As Thou gav'st Thyself for us?

What to Thee shall we reply,
Who for us didst bleed and die,
When Thou shalt the question make,
'What have ye done for My sake?

Hard in heart, in action weak,
Lord, Thy grace divine we seek:
Set us from our bondage free;
Draw us, and we follow Thee.

GOOD FRIDAY.

From St. Bernard.

Hail that head with sorrows bowing,
Crowned with thorns, with anguish flowing;
And that body pierced and shaken,
Mocked of man, of God forsaken,
Marred beyond the sons of men!

By Thy death of life the giver,
When we suffer, O deliver!
In our sorrow and our weakness,
Thou who didst prevail by meekness,
Think upon Thy woes again!

When the hour of death is near us,
Be Thou present, Lord, to cheer us;
In that time of fear and sadness
Tarry not, our help and gladness,
Saviour of the sons of men!

When our latest breath is failing,
Be Thy Spirit all-prevailing;
When the tempter's wiles shall prove us,
Show Thy sacred sign above us,
Hold us, save us, free us then!

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

From St. Bernard.

Thou, Saviour, who Thyself didst give,
That all the world might turn and live,
Who dost the careless sinner draw
With cords of love to Thy pure law,
Who dost Thy Church with fondness call,
And by Thy grace receivest all;

Behold us, Lord, before Thy throne,
Inspire and make our hearts Thine own;
Bind to Thy Cross our wandering will,
Each act with holy purpose fill;
Our weakness let Thy strength defend,
Thou Author of our faith, and End!

ASCENSION-DAY.

Psalm xxiv.

The earth is God's, the fulness too
Of all that therein is,
Upon the floods He founded it,
And built it on the seas.

Who shall go up the hill of God,
And in His dwelling stand?
Even the man of pure intent
And undefiled hand:

Who hath not lifted up his heart
To trust in vanity:
Nor dealt untruly by his friend,
Nor sworn deceitfully.

The family of Israel,
The men who seek His grace,
These shall be blest and righteous held
Before the God of grace.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

Saviour, Thy Father's promise send;
Spirit of holiness, descend;
Lo, we are waiting for Thee, Lord,
All in one place with one accord.

Come, and convince us all of sin,
Lighting Thy lamp our hearts within;
Thy temples, — but, alas, how slow
Thy presence and Thy voice to know!

Convince us all of righteousness:
By that great work Thy people bless,
Which our High-Priest hath wrought alone,
And carried to His Father's throne.

Of judgment, Lord, convince us too;
Teach us in Christ all things to view:
O make us pure, with lightened eyes,
Harmless as doves, as serpents wise!

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Hark, through the courts of heaven
  Voices of angels sound:
'He that was dead now lives again;
  He that was lost is found.'

God of unfailing grace,
  Send down Thy Spirit now;
Raise the rejected soul to hope,
  And make the lofty bow.

In countries far from home,
  On earthly husks we feed;
Back to our Father's house, O Lord,
  Our wandering footsteps lead.

Then at each soul's return,
  The heavenly harp shall sound:
'He that was dead now lives again;
  He that was lost is found.'

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Psalm xlvi.

God is our refuge and our strength
When trouble's hour is near;
A very present help is He,
Therefore we will not fear:

Although the pillars of the earth
Shall clean removed be;
The very mountains carried forth
And cast into the sea:

Although the waters rage and swell,
So that the earth shall shake;
Yea, and the solid mountain-roots
Shall with the tempest quake:

The Lord of Hosts our refuge is
When trouble's hour is near;
The God of Jacob is with us,
Therefore we will not fear.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

O Thou who hast Thy servants taught
That not by words alone,
But by the fruits of holiness
The life of God is shown;

While in Thy house of prayer we meet,
And call Thee God and Lord,
Give us an heart to follow Thee,
Obedient to Thy word.

When we our voices lift in praise,
Give Thou us grace to bring
An offering of unfeigned thanks,
And with the Spirit sing.

And in the dangerous path of life,
Uphold us as we go;
That with our lips and in our lives
Thy glory we may show.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Forth to the land of promise bound,
Our desert path we tread;
God's fiery pillar for our guide,
His Captain at our head.

E'en now we faintly glimpse the hills,
And catch their distant blue;
And the bright city's gleaming spires
Rise dimly on our view.

Soon, when the desert shall be crossed,
The flood of death passed o'er,
Our pilgrim-hosts shall safely land
On Canaan's peaceful shore.

There love shall have its perfect work,
And prayer be lost in praise;
And all the servants of our God
Their endless anthem raise.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE.

We walk by faith, and not by sight;
No gracious words we hear
From him who spoke as never man,
But we believe Him near.

We may not touch His hands and side,
Nor follow where he trod;
But in His promise we rejoice,
And cry, 'My Lord and God.'

Help Thou, O Lord, our unbelief;
And may our faith abound,
To call on Thee when Thou art near,
And seek where Thou art found:

That when our life of faith is done,
In realms of clearer light
We may behold Thee as Thou art,
With full and endless sight.

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

The great Apostle, called by grace,
Weaned from all works beside,
Preached the same faith he once abhorred,
And Christ, whom he denied.

In perils and in troubles oft,
His toilsome life he past;
But He who turned his heart at first,
Upheld him to the last.

A chosen vessel of His will,
He fought the fight of faith;
And gained the crown of righteousness,
Obedient unto death.

Thus, Lord of grace, to all Thy will
Obedient may we be;
And follow meekly in his steps,
E'en as he followed Thee.

ST. MATTHIAS'S DAY.

The highest and the holiest place
Guards not the heart from sin;
The church that safest seems without,
May harbor foes within.

Thus in the small and chosen band
Beloved above the rest,
One fell from his apostleship,
A traitor-soul unblest.

But not the great designs of God
Man's sin shall overthrow;
Another witness to the truth
Forth to the lands shall go.

Righteous, O Lord, are all Thy ways;
Long as the worlds endure,
From foes without and foes within
Thy Church shall stand secure.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die;
But Thine shall never fail;
The word of grace no less shall sound,
The truth no less prevail.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE B. V. MARY.

The first sad hours of shame
One promise bright bestow;
The woman's seed shall rise at length,
And bruise the deadly foe.

Where sin abounded once,
Grace shall abound much more;
Woman, the first gave ear to sin,
The great Redeemer bore.

Blest was her favored womb,
Happy her sacred breast;
The sojourn of the Lord of life,
And where His lips were prest.

But doubly blest are they
Who hear and keep His will;
In them by faith is Jesus formed,
And dwells within them still.

And still the gracious words
To each believer sound;
'Hail, highly-favored; with the Lord
Thou hast acceptance found.'

ST. MARK'S DAY.

Evangelist, by whom the Lord
His last commission did record;
We praise His holy name, that we
Such grace and comfort have by thee.

Not yet the everlasting Word
Hath been by every creature heard;
Not yet the new baptismal birth
Saves the repentant tribes of earth.

Why slumbereth then each promised sign?
Why worketh not the grace divine?
Why should the foe unchecked remain,
The Holy Name invoked in vain?

Thy chastening justice, Lord, we own:
On us be guilt and shame alone;
How can we hope those gifts to share
Which come by fasting and by prayer?

Weak in our faith, in duty weak,
Rather Thy pitying love we seek;
Father, Thine arm of vengeance stay;
Saviour, O cast us not away!

ST. BARNABAS THE APOSTLE.

Brightly did the light divine
From his words and actions shine,
Whom the Twelve, with love unblamed,
'Son of Consolation' named.

Full of peace and lively joy,
Sped he on his high employ;
By his mild exhorting word
Adding many to the Lord.

Blessed Spirit, who didst call
Barnabas and holy Paul,
And didst them with gifts endue,
Mighty words and wisdom true;

Grant us, Lord of Life, to be,
By their pattern, full of Thee;
That beside them we may stand
In that day, on Thy right hand.

ST. PETER'S DAY.

When, within sight of danger's hour,
We boast of self-possessing power,
Teach us, O Lord, betimes to know
How weak are we, how strong the foe.

And when, beset by snares around,
Faithless to Thee our hearts are found,
Look Thou upon us, and renew
Our wandering thoughts, our vows untrue.

Then though Thou doubt us, and our love
By question and temptation prove;
Faithful to Thee we shall abide,
In honor as in weakness tried.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

Blessed are they whose hearts are pure,
From guile their spirits free;
To them shall God reveal Himself,
They shall His glory see.

Their simple souls upon His word,
In fullest light of love,
Place all their trust, and ask no more
Than guidance from above.

Who in meek faith unmixed with doubt
The engrafted word receive,
Whom the first sign of heavenly Power
Persuades, and they believe;

They, as they walk the painful world,
See hidden glories rise;
Our God the sunshine of His love
Unfolds before their eyes.

For them far greater things than these
Doth Christ the Lord prepare;
Whose bliss no heart of man can reach,
No human voice declare.

ST. MATTHEW.

'Arise, and follow me!'
Who answers to the call?
Not Ruler, Scribe, or Pharisee,
Proud and regardless all.

'Arise, and follow me!'
The Publican hath heard;
And by the deep Gennesaret sea
Obeys the Master's word.

Thenceforth in joy and fear,
Where'er the Saviour trod,
Among the Twelve his place was near
The Holy One of God.

His is no honor mean,
For Christ to write and die:
Apostle, Saint, Evangelist,
His record is on high.

ST. LUKE.

Lift high the song of praise
For him whose holy pen
Gave down the hymns of other days
To glad the sons of men!

Glory to God on high,
And peace upon the earth,
Good-will to men, be now proclaimed,
As at the Saviour's birth.

The Lord to magnify,
Be lifted every voice,
And in our God and Saviour
Let every soul rejoice.

With benedictions high,
Let Israel's God be praised;
Who hath salvation's mighty horn
Up for His people raised.

And when around our path
The call of death is heard,
Lord, let Thou us depart in peace,
According to Thy word.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

Let the Church of God rejoice,
For the Apostles' fostering care,
For the sounding of their voice,
For their preaching and their prayer;

Whom the Lord our God did choose,
To the farthest lands to go;
Whom the Husbandman did use
Holiest seed on earth to sow.

In the new Jerusalem
Twelve foundations firm are laid;
On the Apostles of the Lamb
Is the glorious structure stayed.

Firmly built on them, may we,
Bound to Christ, our Corner-Stone,
In the heavenly temple be,
One in heart, in doctrine one.

HOLY BAPTISM.

In token that thou shalt not fear
  Christ crucified to own,
We print the cross upon thee here,
  And stamp thee His alone.

In token that thou shalt not blush
  To glory in His name,
We blazen here upon thy front
  His glory and His shame.

In token that thou shalt not flinch
  Christ's quarrel to maintain,
But 'neath His banner manfully
  Firm at thy post remain;

In token that thou too shalt tread
  The path He travelled by,
Endure the cross, despise the shame,
  And sit thee down on high;

Thus outwardly and visibly
  We seal thee for His own;
And may the brow that wears His cross
  Hereafter share His crown!

HOLY COMMUNION.

Lo, the feast is spread to-day;
Jesus summons, come away!
From the vanity of life,
From the sounds of mirth or strife,
To the feast by Jesus giv'n,
Come, and taste the Bread of Heaven.

Why, with proud excuse and vain,
Spurn His mercy once again?
From amidst life's social ties,
From the farm and merchandise,
Come, for all is now prepared;
Freely given, be freely shared.

Blessed are the lips that taste
Our Redeemer's marriage-feast;
Blessed, who on Him shall feed,
Bread of Life, and drink indeed;
Blessed, for their thirst is o'er;
They shall never hunger more.

Make then once again your choice,
Hear to-day His calling voice:
Servants, do your Master's will;
Bidden guests, His table fill;
Come, before His wrath shall swear
Ye shall never enter there.

FOR A FAST-DAY.

Psalm cxxx.

Out of the deep we call to Thee;
  Lord, we are weak and faint:
O let Thine ears consider well
  The voice of our complaint.

Wert thou our sins extreme to mark,
  O Lord, who should be spared?
But there is mercy with Thee, Lord,
  Therefore Thou shalt be feared.

We look for Thee; our spirits wait;
  Our trust is in Thy word:
Even before the morning watch
  We flee unto the Lord.

Trust in the Lord, O Israel,
  For there is mercy there;
And He His people shall redeem
  From sin, and guilt, and care.

FOR A THANKSGIVING-DAY.

Lift high the sound of thanks and praise:
Hallelujah!
In God's own Church your voices raise:
Hallelujah!
For all the mercies of His love
Our lips and lives shall grateful prove:
Hallelujah!

He is our Strength: He is our King:
Hallelujah!
He will His Church to glory bring:
Hallelujah!
To God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Be everlasting honor done:
Hallelujah!

FOR MORNING.

Jam lucis orto sidere.

Now hath arisen the star of day,
And with his rising let us pray,
That we throughout his course be freed
From sinful thought and hurtful deed.

O may the Lord our tongues restrain
From sounding strife, and converse vain:
And from His servants' eyesight hide
The toys of vanity and pride.

May He our inner thoughts make pure,
From sins presumptuous us secure;
Grant us to use such abstinence
As may subdue the things of sense.

That we, when night succeeds to-day,
And this bright sun hath past away,
Unspotted from the world may raise
To God, our Saviour, songs of praise.

AFTER HARVEST.

Come, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of Harvest-home!
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin:
God our Maker doth provide
For our wants to be supplied:—
Come to God's own temple, come,
Raise the song of Harvest-home!

We ourselves are God's own field,
Fruit unto His praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown,
Unto joy or sorrow grown:
First the blade, and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear:
Grant, O harvest Lord, that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,
And shall take His harvest home;
From His field shall purge away
All that doth offend that day;

Give His angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast;
But the fruitful ears to store
In His garner evermore.

Then, thou Church triumphant, come,
Raise the song of Harvest-home!
All are safely gathered in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin;
There, for ever purified,
In God's garner to abide:
Come, ten thousand angels, come,
Raise the glorious Harvest-home!

JUDGMENT HYMN.

Dies iræ.

PART I.

Day of anger, that dread day
Shall the sign in Heaven display,
And the earth in ashes lay.
O what trembling shall appear,
When His coming shall be near,
Who shall all things strictly clear!
When the trumpet shall command,
Through the tombs of every land,
All before the throne to stand!

Death shall shrink and nature quake,
When all creatures shall awake,
Answer to their Judge to make.
See the Book divinely penn'd,
In which all is found contained,
Whence the world shall be arraigned!
When the Judge is on His throne,
All that's hidden shall be shown,
Nought unpunished or unknown!

What shall I before Him say?
How shall I be safe that day,
When the righteous scarcely may?
King of awful majesty,
Saving sinners graciously,
Fount of mercy, save Thou me!
Leave me not, my Saviour, one
For whose soul Thy course was run,
Lest I be that day undone.

PART II.

Thou didst toil my soul to gain,
Didst redeem me with Thy pain;
Be such labor not in vain.
Thou just Judge of wrath severe,
Grant my sins remission here,
Ere Thy reckoning day appear.
My transgressions grievous are,
Scarce look up for shame I dare:
Lord, Thy guilty suppliant spare.

Thou didst heal the sinner's grief,
And didst hear the dying thief;
Even I may hope relief.
All unworthy is my prayer;
Make my soul Thy mercy's care,
And from fire eternal spare.
Place me with Thy sheep — that band
Who shall separated stand
From the goats, on Thy right hand.

When thy voice in wrath shall say,
Cursed ones, depart away!
Call me with the blest, I pray.
Lord, Thine ear in mercy bow;
Broken is my heart and low:
Guard of my last end be Thou.
In that day, that mournful day,
When to judgment wakes our clay,
Show me mercy, Lord, I pray.

FOR FAMILY WORSHIP.

Saviour of them that trust in Thee,
Once more, with supplicating cries,
We lift the heart and bend the knee,
And bid devotion's incense rise.

For mercies past we praise Thee, Lord,
The fruits of earth, the hopes of heaven;
Thy helping arm, Thy guiding word,
And answered prayers, and sins forgiven.

Whene'er we tread on danger's height,
Or walk temptation's slippery way,
Be still, to steer our steps aright,
Thy word our guide, Thine arm our stay.

Be ours Thy fear and favor still,
United hearts, unchanging love;
No scheme that contradicts Thy will,
No wish that centres not above.

And since we must be parted here,
  Support us when the hour shall come;
Wipe gently off the mourner's tear,
  Rejoin us in our heavenly home.

RECENT POEMS.

A WISH.

Would it were mine, amidst the changes
Through which our varied lifetime ranges,
To live on Providence's bounty
Down in some favored Western county.

There let the daily sun be gleaming
Over rich vales, with plenty teeming:
Bold hills my sheltered home surrounding,
And Ocean in the distance sounding.

Thick trees and shrubs should rise about me,
That the rude passers might not flout me;
Huge elms my lowly roof embowering,
And poplars from my shrubbery towering.

In the smooth turf choice beds of posies,
And lilies white, and crimson roses;
Climbers my trellised doorway lining,
Vines, round the eaves their tendrils twining.

Some village tower upon me peeping,
And churchyard, where the dead lie sleeping:
The tombs, for a 'memento mori':
The pinnacles, to point to glory.

There may I dwell with those who love me:
And when the earth shall close above me,
My memory leave a lasting savor
Of grace divine, and human favor.

A WINTER MORNING SCENE.

Far on the sloping casement from the East
Looks through the frosted haze the purple sun,
As with a heavenly presence filling all
The lowly chamber. First, the wakened girl
With fullest heart bends o'er the slumbering boy,—
'Awake, arise; the golden morning comes!'
Not his the sleep that needs be summoned twice;
At once his bright eye opens,—and at once
His merry voice gives welcome jubilant
To the first rays of day. There yet is one
Calm in warm slumber:—'Sister, come and see!
The glory of the Lord is on the hills,
An angel is come down to wake the sun!'
Together rising, see the gladdened group
Fresh from the dews of sleep, and glorified
By the now streaming sunshine, full of joy,
Gazing entranced.

A TRUANT HOUR.

Bonn, July 8, 1847.[1]

The golden stars keep watch aloft;
Unmarked the moments glide along,
Save that around me scatters oft
Yon nightingale his pearls of song: —

The hum of men, the roar of wheels,
That filled the streets erewhile, are gone;
The inner consciousness but feels
The lowly river rolling on.

The course of thoughts and being, pent
As waters ere they plunge below,
Reflects a downward firmament
Of life and things, in gleamy show.

[1] On the Alte Zoll, over the Rhine. The sweet odor of the grape bloom filled the air; the heaven was tremulously reflected in the eddies of the river, as the realities of life in the dreams of the sleepers; and the clocks of the town were telling the hour of the night. Hence the imagery.

Thus rest, so hushed with airs of balm
That reach them from their promise land,
The righteous souls, in stillest calm
Laid up in their Redeemer's hand.

All that has been, and all that is,
Back from their thoughts in light is given,
Deep firmaments of inward bliss
Far glittering into distant heaven.

The while, side-heard as in a dream,
The ages strike their solemn chime;
And from the ancient hills, the stream
Rolls onward of predestined Time.

NOVEMBER, 1847.

O FOR one word of that Almighty voice,
Whose tone, though gentle, pierced the ear of death —
TALITHA, CUMI! O that He might stand
Above this faded flower, and breathe back life!
Was there no way, my sister dear, but this —
That in the fulness of thy life of love,
Expanding duties, daily strengthening ties, —
And with this new-born treasure lately found,
Thou must drop off and die? Mysterious God —
In whose high hearing nothing Thou hast made
But sounds in heavenly harmony entire —
Teach us the master-note, that may reduce
To concord this heart-breaking dissonance —
Shine on us with that Sun, whose mighty rays
Have shone upon our sister, so that all
Left on this earth, though dear a thousand-fold
To her, whose heart is filled with purest love,
Moves not one sigh, — so blessed is she now.

APRIL, 1844.

There was a child, bright as the summer prime,
Fair as a flower. Not long his speaking eyes
Had uttered meaning: nature's love not long
Had stolen into his heart. One sweet May morn
His young life dawned: — so that the Summer heats
Unconscious passed he through: — the Autumn fruits
Just gladdened him with bloom — the sparkling frost
Awoke his greeting smile: but when the Spring
Broke out upon the earth, lighting with stars
Of floral radiance all the level green, —
Then was his joy a living laughing thing;
He held the colored buds — their beauty fed
His eager longing — up to those he loved
He held them in the fulness of his joy,
And laughter, eloquent of inward bliss.
Dear child — for thou wert ours — this and the like,
A few sweet visions of thine infant smiles,
A few bright hours of purity and calm,
Are all of thee that we remember now:
For in the sunshine of that rising Spring,
When lavish bloom was poured on all around,
Thy cheek alone grew pale: day after day
Thou fadest from our sight: yet even thus,

Long as thine eyes could gaze, thy fingers clasp,
Brought we our tribute due of gleaming buds,
Glad, if we might one moment wake anew
Thy dormant thought, and light thine eyes with joy.

LACRYMÆ PATERNA. 1851.

I.

This tranquil Sabbath morn hath hushed the earth
Into unwonted calm. The clear pale hills
Lie beneath level lines of sunny clouds,
Walling our prospect round. A hundred fields
Rest from their six days' tillage — save where kine
Peaceful their herbage crop, or ruminate
Recumbent. Every vernal garden flower,
Crocus gold-bright, or varnished celandine,
Or violet, sapphire-eyed or bridal white,
Opens its bosom to the ascending sun.
One only looks not up, but ever droops,
Droops, but with matchless grace, and not to earth,
But, with firm stalk, its head alone depends, —
The snowdrop, lovelier than them all. Ev'n thus
Bow down, my spirit, with thy load of grief,
Bow down, — but be not crushed: be yet thy stem
Upright and firm, on God's good purpose stayed.
But I no more can look into the heaven
As do yon gayer blooms: touched by God's hand,
'Mara my name, but Naomi no more:' —
For one lithe form I miss this Sabbath morn,
Which, full of life and joy, on days like this
Tripped o'er these walks, feeding on sight and sound,

Holding half-closed the holy book in hand,
And mingling with the loved and half-learned lore
Of parable, or sweet recital, gleams
Of nature's various life. O memory sweet!
O inexhausted fount of tearful joy!

II.

Once more among the rose-tree boughs, that trail
Athwart the cloudless sky, from where I sit
I see our little yearly visitant
The blithesome wren, run eager: now with wings
Outspread and fluttering, now with swiftest dart
At latent insect — then with warbling trill
Of soft and liquid song, singing his hymn
Of purest vernal joy. But not alone
Such sight and music stir me: — one short year,
How short, how long! since thou, thy hand in mine,
Our breath in silence held, stoodst by my side,
Summoned from busy task to watch that bird —
I see thee now — thy clear blue eyes lit up
With eager light of love — thy frame, attent
And rapt to catch each note of that sweet song —
I hear thee whisper — 'O, how beautiful!'
Dear child of memory! on my lonely path
Bright are the rays shed from thee — brighter far
Than aught I find in men or books, beside!

III.

I search the heavens and earth for news of thee,
But find them not. That sunlit continent
Hung in mid-air, that with transmitted light
Gladdens this peaceful night, is that thy home?

Abidest thou where bright and pale by turns
Her hills and plains gleam evident? Art thou
Among the thousand times ten thousand saints
There stationed, till He come, and we arise
To meet Him, when He brings ye in the air?
Nor shrink I from such questioning. His works
Who framed the wondrous universe, by rule
And due apportionment are fitted all,
Each to its separate use. And that pure isle
Of treasured light, journeying with this our earth,
Wherefore thus waits it on the world of man?
Say, to give light by night; but wherefore then
So scant, and intermitted? Say, to swell
The tides salubrious, and to air, sun-dried,
Restore its genial moisture. But nor this
Seems to suffice. Hath that fair-fashioned world
No tributary use for this world's lord?
Doth it no purpose serve for *man*? If life,
Life various and material, there were fed
As here below, then would the varying clouds
Dapple her argent surface, and pale belts
Of fleecy mist athwart her orb extend,
Which are not found. Material life and growth,
Nourished as here, is none. If living tribes
Are there, then live they by some law unknown
To us, whom tillage of the moistened soil
Feeds, on the succulent and annual growth
Of still decaying matter still renewed.
If there they live, they live without decay,
Unnourished, and undying. Beauty there
Spreads not the landscape with rich fields and woods,
Brown glebes, and errant streams: but spiry rocks

Burn in untempered sunlight, and wide shades
Invite to cool, and deepen into night.
Fit haunt for spirits, — for to local bound,
Though hard to set, all spirits are confined,
Save that unbounded One, who lives through all, —
Fit haunt for blessed spirits to abide,
In holiest intercourse and love unsoiled,
In sight of earth and heaven, their final bliss.
Nor let us dream of aught that might degrade
Our holiest Faith in this. He that was dead
And lives again, the bright and morning Star
Of all our yearning hopes, — shall any say
They dwell not *there*, because they dwell *with Him*?
He is, where sin is not. Among them there,
He, in the body of His glory, may
As once in Eden, walk: high Visitant,
Teacher sublime: — there may they humble sit
Beside His feet, and learn.
Here let us pause:
Nor further license give to Fancy's wing:
Ev'n thus, may some believe, too wide we roam.

IV.

Ev'n thus, may some believe, too wide we roam:
But roam we wider still. Yon orb of light
Daunting the heavenward eye with potent beam,
Serves it not, too, some glorious end for man?
Say, it were made to rule this nether day:
Almighty Power might with such sheen endow
Some point minute; nor spend a million worlds
To light one system of dependent orbs.
Say, it were built so vast, by central force

Those orbs to draw attractive, lest in space
Wheeling immense, the orbits far and cold
Of planets even now but known to man
Their common bond forget, and errant roam.
Yet, be this so : — shall each dependent world
Be portioned out for bird, and beast, and man,
And this, the noblest, dreary all and blank,
Home of no life, — alone of all the band
Though brightest, radiant with no love nor joy ?
And grant that high Intelligences dwell
Within yon spanning belt of dazzling fire,
Whence, and what are they ? Do they fall, as here,
By death, and feed decay ? Do they, as here,
Sorrow, and sin, and toil, and hate, and pine ?
Fades there the brightest ? Has love there its frosts,
Its worms that gnaw the root, — its withering buds ?
Our earth obeys its law, vicissitude :
One while, we bask beneath the genial ray,
One while, in grateful night our strength renew :
Winter gives nature rest, — the voice of Spring
Calls forth the buds, — Summer the bloom unfolds,
And lavish Autumn sheds the mellowed fruit,
And so we live by change. But there no night
Drops on the vales, nor visits them the dawn :
That orb serene eternal brightness clothes ;
Nor seasons' varied course is known, nor march
Of years recurrent : fit abode for those
Whose life hath done with change, and rests in bliss.
What if each system have its sun, its heaven ?
What if the sentient dwellers in its orbs,
Their course of conflict run, their goal attained,
Meet on those glittering spheres in joy and love ?

And what if all, uncounted firmaments
Of suns, with angel habitants, around
The Central Throne in mingling glory roll ?

V.

Why day by day this painful questioning ?
I know, that it is well. I know that *there*
(O *where* ?) thou hast protectors, guardians, friends,
If such be needed : angel companies
Move round thee : mighty Spirits lead thy thoughts
To founts of knowledge which we never saw.
I know that thou art happy — fresh desire
Springing each day, and each day satisfied :
God's glorious works all open to thy view,
His blessed creatures thine, where pain nor death
Disturbs not nor divides. All this I know, —
But O for one short sight of what I know !

VI.

September 3, 1850.

Here take thy stand : within this chamber lone
That looks upon the unfathomable blue
Of the blest ocean, take thy stand awhile :
Ah mournful task ! and watch yon fading face,
So lately lit with love and eager joy,
Now blank, but beautiful ! Trace thou those lines
Which death hath spared — build up that noble brow,
Part the fair hair, and mimic with thy brush
That curl, whose very flexure tells of him.
Precious thine art, — God's gift — how often said, —
How never felt till now ! This Autumn day

We leave thee here with him. Death, cease thy work!
Forget thy course, decay! One favoring hour
Befriend our wish — how earnest, but how vain!

VII.

O sweet refreshment to the wearied heart,
This converse with th' unalterable dead!
I know not where, nor rightly what thou art:
I only know that thou art blest and bright,
Unfading, and mine own: and thus I sit
Long pensive hours alone, scarce stirred in thought,
Scanning thy presence through a mist of tears.
Others may change — but thou shalt never change:
Forgetfulness, and distance, and neglect,
The chills of earthly love, — the stealthy pace
Of summer-stealing age, — these touch not thee:
That heart of thine, fresh well of living love,
Hadst thou been here, might in long years have failed,
Or poured on thankless fields its errant streams,
Or flowed away (such sad vicissitudes
We learn to look for, who live long on earth)
Else-whither in abundance, sparing here
Few drops and scant. But now, beloved one,
That everlasting fount is all our own.

VIII.

They tell me, that we soon shall meet again:
That some have heard the mighty chariot wheels
Roar in the distance: that the world's salt tears
Are cleaving their last furrows in her cheeks.
It may be so: I know not. Oft the ear
Attent and eager for some coming friend,

Construes each breeze among the vocal boughs
Into the tokens of his wish'd approach.
But this I know: HE liveth, and shall stand
Upon this earth: and round Him, thick as waves
That laugh with light at noon, uncounted hosts
Of His redeemed: — and this I further know:
Then shall I see thee — amidst all that band
Know thee unsought: and midst a thousand joys
Ineffable, — our own shall we possess,
Clasped heart to heart, and looking eye to eye.
O dawn, millennial day! Come, blessed morn!
Appear, Desire of Nations! rend thy heavens,
And stand revealed upon thy chosen hill!

OUR EARLY FRIENDS.

One, and another — pass they, and are gone,
Our early friends. Like minute-bells of heaven,
Across our path in fitful wailings driven,
Hear we death's tidings ever and anon.
A little longer, and we stand alone:
A few more strokes of the Almighty rod,
And the dread presence of the voice of God
About our footsteps shall be heard and known.
Toil on, toil on, thou weary weary arm:
Hope ever onward, heavy-laden heart:
Let the false charmer ne'er so wisely charm,
Listen we not, but ply our task apart,
Cheering each hour of work with thoughts of rest,
And with their love, who labored and are blest.

PIECES AND FRAGMENTS

PRINTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS AMERICAN EDITION.

FEBRUARY 3, 1830.

The Morning arose,
She was pillow'd on snows,
And kerchief'd in wind and storm;
And she dallied with Night
Till Hyperion's light
Had struggled abroad thro' her form.

The Noon came forth
On the breeze of the north,
All silent and bleak and chill;
And he watch'd the streak
Of the Spring's young cheek
As she peep'd o'er the western hill.

Then Evening's eye
Look'd out from the sky
On the mirror of Ocean's wave;
Like an island of light
Whose margin bright
Heaven's ripples of emerald lave.

AUGUST 19, 1830.

I go to the region of dreams,
Where a veil is drawn o'er the bright day-beams,
And a soft and shadowy mist of light
Is spread o'er the spiritual realms of sight —
And faces are not as faces were,
But there is an indistinctness there,
  And features are idly marked and dim;
For the soul hath then the sway alone,
And sitteth upon her central throne,
And she goeth to meet but half the way
The forms of matter we see by day;
But then her passions are all her own, —
  And the cup of joy is full to the brim,
And the eyes of the roaming intellect
Are busy in prospect and retrospect; —
And many a deed is acted o'er
Which seemed from the memory blotted before,
And many a course of action is spent
Which wanteth yet its accomplishment; —
And earth and heaven and realms below
  Are open and free to the spirit's range,
As she bounds with bliss or sinks in woe,
  In wilderment swift and wondrous change.

I go to the land of dreams —
My soul's fast flowing streams
Sink for a time
Into a deep and shadowy cave
Silent and slumberous as the grave;
But they soon shall rise
And flow again with gurgling chime
In the light of day's fair eyes.

I go to the land of dreams, —
To the pool in the deepest and inmost grove,
Where dwell reflections of things I love,
Wavering and flickering on the lake
As the night breeze blows and the ripples break;
But cast by their fixèd forms above,
Which beam in blest tranquillity
From the firmament of Eternity.

I go to the land of dreams —
I love that faery region well:
For things more lovely than I can tell
In its haunted bowers and shrubberies dwell: —
Thou busy world, Farewell.

1830.

Thou little flower, that on thy stem
Totterest as the breezes blow;
There is no strife with thee and them,
They kiss thee as they go.

The pretty lambs welcome their life
In the fresh morning of the year;
Taking no forethought of the knife,
They play, and do not fear.

Bow down thy head, thou little flower,
No longer show so trim and gay;
Lie still and pass thine evil hour,
Look up another day.

Thou pretty lamb, on tender sward
No more of thy quaint skippings take;
Cheat thy soft life of fate so hard,
Lie still, and do not wake.

They will not heed — for some kind Power
Long as the sun and stars remain,
Hath cast together in one hour
The lots of joy and pain.

From conflict of the stern and mild
Rises the life of gentlest things;
And out of mixtures strange and wild
Most quiet beauty springs.

FRAGMENT OF A PROPOSED DRAMA, 1832.

Alcibiades loquitur.

—Like a great river, toward the rising sun
Broad Hellespont is flowing: far beyond,
Over a land of never-dying names
Tower the brows of Ida. I can see
The white waves chase each other on the deep,
Between our Cherronese and Vulcan's isle;
And there, where the azure level of the sea
Flush meets the laughing blue, full many a league
My thought sails daily, till above the waves
Grey headlands rise, and Æro-Sunium's fane
Traces its glittering shafts upon the sky.
O Athens — O my mother — couldst thou now
Make peace in my torn bosom — couldst thou
Receive thy son, as thou receivedst him now,
With thronging ports and humming populace,—
Could I but now be standing as I stood
Upon the sacred way, where grateful passed
The holy pomp beneath my guarding hand!
— But why thus weak? Is it that all is lost?
May not the tumult of wild battle yet
Be poured around me — may not yet again
The hoarse wave dash about the ploughing prow,
And subject cities * * * *.

WRITTEN IN AID OF THE LEICESTER LUNATIC ASYLUM, 1836.

Light ye the torch, —
The torch that hath expired —
The light with which was fired
Chamber and hall and porch —
But now the house is dark,
Its inmates rove in vain,
There shines but a bewildering spark : —
Light ye the torch again!

Light ye the torch, —
It was a sacred flame —
From God in heav'n it came :
All nature ye may search
To find a fire so bright,
And ye shall search in vain :
But quenched is all its glorious light : —
Light ye the torch again!

Light ye the torch, —
The ruthless winds have blown
Its tresses up and down,
Till it did scare and scorch,

Not bless : but one fell blast
Swept howling o'er the plain,
And left all darkness as it past ; —
Light ye the torch again !

Light ye the torch, —
And ye shall blessed be :
Till many a bended knee
In chamber and in church
Shall serve ye : merciful,
Mercy ye shall obtain :
Your cup of glory shall be full : —
Light ye the torch again !

RYDAL MOUNT. June, 1838.

This day without its record may not pass,
In which I first have seen the lowly roof
That shelters Wordsworth's age. A love intense,
Born of the power that charmed me in his song,
But grown beyond it into higher moods
And deeper gratitude, bound me to seek
His rural dwelling. Fitting place I found,
Blest with rare beauty, set in deepest calm:
Looking upon still waters, whose expanse
Might tranquillize all thought; and bordered round
By mountains springing from the turfy slopes
That bound the margin, to where heath and fern
Dapple their soaring sides, and higher still
To where the bare crags cleave the vap'rous sky.

TO

ALICE, MARY, AMBROSE, AND CLEMENT.

JANUARY 25, 1844.

From their father in the flesh, and elder brother in Christ. — H. A.

CHILDREN of your Father's love,
Children of your God above,
See the Cross, whereon pourtrayed
All your duties are displayed.

ALICE, eldest born and first,
Babe with love peculiar nurst,
Founded deep and builded high
On the Rock of Calvary,
Ever on that holy ground
At the Cross's foot be found;
Be in love and duty best,
As their shaft, support the rest.

MARY, may thy thoughts aspire
Up to heav'n with holy fire;
In thy childhood mindful be
Of the HEAD that bow'd for thee.
When He bowed His sacred Head,
Three remained, though all had fled;
Three who bore thy blessed name;
Be thy faith and love the same.

AMBROSE, dear immortal boy,
Child of simple mirth and joy,
Be through life, however tried,
Ever at thy Saviour's SIDE.
Safe in danger, pure from ill,
May His HAND support thee still;
In That Day, with glory crown'd,
On His right hand be thou found.

CLEMENT, peaceful, holy child,
As thy name is, meek and mild,
Wearing fresh for all to see
Thy Baptismal purity, —
Little one, thy Saviour's breast
Holds thee, gently, fondly prest;
Whatsoe'er He may decree,
Still His ARM shall shelter thee.

FATHER, MOTHER, CHILDREN, — all,
Be we ready at His call:
HIS, to suffer or to do, —
Warm in love, in duty true.

L'ENVOI, 1852.

All day long the tear is swelling,
Drops, and then anew is swelling,
Constant, in its crystal dwelling.

All day long, each other chasing,
Over life's dank meadows chasing,
Deeper shadows are increasing.

Dim the prospect all with sorrow,
Joyless mists and clouds of sorrow:
Eve to-day, and night to-morrow.

Gone, my blest ones? both departed?
Taken leave, and long departed?
Past away, my noble-hearted?

From the midst of warm embraces,
Sports and smiles and fond embraces,
Dropt among forgotten faces?

Blank is home, and cold without ye,
Long and drear the days without ye, —
Nestling memories crowd about ye.

Come then, let me tell your story,
Oft thought-o'er, familiar story;
Heavy sunset, morn of glory.

Clement, peaceful still and holy,
Pure and bright and calm and holy,
Sweetest rose-bud fading slowly.

Cloudless clear that Easter morning,
Gems hung every flower that morning,
Earth her conqueror's pomp adorning.

Watching thy pale face distracted,
We, with faith and woe distracted,
Long, the long farewell expected.

Came at last the foe and bound thee,
With his icy film fast bound thee,—
Hearts were poured in tears around thee.

Sleepless nights we lay and pondered,
O'er thy fair decay we pondered,
At thy beauty wept and wondered.

Out of sight we took and laid thee,
By that old church wall we laid thee,
Long and sad adieu we bade thee.

Then for years in peace remaining,
Calm beneath our woe remaining
We past onward uncomplaining.

One was with us upward growing,
In pure mirth and joyance growing,
Fairest flower in fragrance blowing.

Still his merry laugh rung round me,
Still his light of smiles was round me,
Still his love with blessing crowned me.

Pause, my soul, amidst thy sorrow:
Arm for toil of sterner sorrow,
Weep to-day, and write to-morrow. [1]

[1] The conclusion was never written; but the subject is resumed in 'Lacrymæ Paternæ.'

1846.

Thou child of Man, fall down
With contrite heart and low;
Inheritor by fleshly birth
Of exile, death and woe.

Thou child of Man, rejoice!
The righteous One hath died —
Behold by faith thy seals of Love,
His hands, His feet, His side!

Thou child of Man, that Blood
Upon thy doors we trace:
The symbol of that mighty Cross
We stamp upon thy face!

Servant of God, go forth
Clad in thy Saviour's name;
Like Him thou must endure the Cross,
Like Him, despise the shame.

Servant of God, hope on
Through tempests and through tears:
The pillar of His presence see,
Lighting the waste of years.

Servant of God, farewell!
The bed of death is made:
Go, with His glorious countenance
To cheer thee through the shade.

Servant of God, all hail!
The bright-hair'd army waits:
And greeting angels round thy path
Throng from the jasper gates.

'Servant of God, well done!'
The judgment is His own —
Pass to the Inner Light, and sit
With Him upon His throne!

THE SALZBURG CHIMES.

Composed to the Melody of the Salzburg Chimes, heard and noted down by the Author in July, 1846.

Sweetly float o'er town and tower
Strains that mark the dawning hour;
Soothing, as it glides along,
Yon fair stream with tinkling song:
Over vineyard, rock and wood,
And where ancient bastion stood,
Heralds now of peaceful times,
Sweetly float the Salzburg chimes.

Once again — from this green hill
Echo lets no leaf be still;
Once again — the Salza's breast
Gives the welling sounds no rest:
Distant in the spreading plain
Mount and tower take up the strain,
Till in yonder Alpine climes
Herdsmen catch the Salzburg chimes.

Yet once again! the merry merry child
Dances to the melody with gambols wild:
Yet once more! the sentry stern
Paces to the time at ev'ry turn:
E'en the sick on painful bed
Lifts in hope his weary head,
And hoary elders bless the times
When first they heard the Salzburg chimes.

Yet once more! ere noonday rise,
Part our steps for other skies:
Yet once more! in memory's ear
Still shall sound that music clear:
And in England's homes of light,
When the cheerful hearth is bright,
Will we, in far distant climes,
Wake the slumbering Salzburg chimes.

HENRY MARTYN AT SHIRAZ.[1] 1851.

I.

A VISION of the bright Shiraz, of Persian bards the theme :
The vine with bunches laden hangs o'er the crystal stream ;
The nightingale all day her notes in rosy thickets trills,
And the brooding heat-mist faintly lies along the distant hills.

[1] 'In consequence of his removal to a garden in the suburbs of the city, where his kind host had pitched a tent for him, he prosecuted the work before him uninterruptedly. Living amidst clusters of grapes by the side of a clear stream, and frequently sitting under the shade of an orange tree, which Jafier Ali Khan delighted to point out to visitors, until the day of his own departure, he passed many a tranquil hour, and enjoyed many a Sabbath of holy rest and divine refreshment.' — *Life of H. Martyn*, p. 362.

May 1st to 10th. — 'Passed some days at Jafier Ali Khan's garden with Mirza Seid Ali, Aga Baba, Sheikh Abul Hassan, reading, at their request, the Old Testament histories. Their attention to the Word and their love and respect for me seemed to increase as the time of my departure approached.

'Aga Baba, who had been reading St. Matthew, related very circumstantially to the company the particulars of the death of Christ. The bed of roses on which we sat, and the notes of the nightingales warbling around us, were not so sweet to me as this discourse from the Persian.' — *Ibid.* p. 417.

II.

About the plain are scatter'd wide in many a crumbling heap,
The fanes of other days, and tombs where Iran's poets sleep : [1]
And in the midst, like burnish'd gems, in noonday light repose
The minarets of bright Shiraz — the City of the Rose.

III.

One group beside the river bank in rapt discourse are seen,
Where hangs the golden orange on its boughs of purest green ;
Their words are sweet and low, and their looks are lit with joy ;
Some holy blessing seems to rest on them and their employ.

IV.

The pale-faced Frank among them sits : what brought him from afar ?
Nor bears he bales of merchandise, nor teaches skill in war :
One pearl alone he brings with him — the Book of life and death, —
One warfare only teaches he — to fight the fight of faith.

V.

And Iran's sons are round him, — and one, with solemn tone,

[1] The plain of Shiraz is covered with ancient ruins ; and contains the tombs of the Persian poets Sadi and Hafiz.

Tells how the Lord of Glory was rejected by His own;
Tells, from the wondrous Gospel, of the Trial and the Doom, —
The words divine of Love and Might, — the Scourge, the Cross, the Tomb!

VI.

Far sweeter to the stranger's ear those Eastern accents sound,
Than music of the nightingale that fills the air around:
Lovelier than balmiest odors sent from gardens of the rose,
The fragrance, from the contrite soul and chastened lip that flows.

VII.

The nightingales have ceased to sing, the roses' leaves are shed,
The Frank's pale face in Tocat's field hath moulder'd with the dead:
Alone and all unfriended, midst his Master's work he fell,
With none to bathe his fever'd brow — with none his tale to tell.

VIII.

But still those sweet and solemn tones about him sound in bliss,
And fragrance from those flowers of God for evermore is his:
For his the meed, by grace, of those who, rich in zeal and love,
Turn many unto righteousness, and shine as stars above.

ON A CYCLAMEN,

Brought by us from Italy, in 1837, and now (1852) still blooming in our green-house.

This fragrant plant from sunny Italy,
Plucked by our passing hand, was homeward brought:
Memorial of that favored clime to be,
And minister sweet food to retrospective thought.

Unchecked in growth, it well repays our care,
Gladdening our cottage with its constant bloom:
By nature prompted, half the varied year;
The other, — gay in honor of its new-found home.

Thick on a bank, beneath a crumbled mass
Of ancient stone-work, by Piano's lake,
Thy fellows cluster yet, and they who pass
See yet their turban'd flowrets to the breezes shake.

The life of Nature's children, who can tell?
What grand old tales their history may hide,
How world-wide empires by them rose and fell,
Or Cæsars trampled o'er them in their legioned pride?

Led by thy scent, perchance, some glorious morn,
Stopped the Cisalpine shepherd as he past,
Built his low hut beneath the sheltering thorn,
And in the door-way sitting, ate his mean repast.

Then a fair garland of his home's own flowers
Culled for the peasant girl he loved the best;
Worn in the first bright day of married hours,
Lapt soft between the hillocks of her panting breast.

So years went on: — that bank his children knew,
Loved the bright rosy tints thy bloom-cups shed,
Oft bathed their limbs in summer's freshest dew
In childhood's naked gambols on thy leafy bed.

Lo, other climes and ways await thee now:
Warm wrapt and weather-fenced *our* forms pass by:
Safe housed with sheltering glass above thee, thou
Amidst mock summers lift'st to heav'n thy laughing eye.

Play on, thou little fount of blameless joy,
Freshening our souls thro' many a weary time;
Gladdening the stately hours of high employ, —
As blest in Britain's mists, as erst in happier clime.

Boston, 135 Washington Street.
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